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HISTORICAL SKETCH

THE LIFE

CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION

OF IRELAND

BY THE REV. FATHER

JOHN W. DUFFIN, S.J.

1863

OF THE

VOL. I

LONDON

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

THE LATE

CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION

OF IRELAND.

By THOMAS WYSE, Esq. JUN.

“ Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.”

HORAT. EPIST. LIB. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE late Bill suppressing the Association of the Catholics of Ireland passed both Houses almost unanimously. Various motives produced a similarity of action seldom witnessed within their walls. One party was guided by a blind hostility to every thing Catholic; another, by a natural apprehension of the movements of a body, whose orbit and elements were not to be accurately measured by any of the known laws of our constitution; a third, by a desire to save the Catholics, from even the possibility of their own indiscretion, and a just anxiety to remove, from the path which ministers had traced out to themselves, every obstacle even of a secondary nature which could tend to embarrass the progress of

their measures. To these, too, in the minds at least of the ministers, might have been super-added, the very important inducement of suppressing, in the enactment which was to suppress the Catholic Association, other associations of a far less constitutional character, and of a tendency to every true interest of society, infinitely more perilous. One portion of this intention has been amply fulfilled; the Association, which was ostensibly in view, has outrun, in its anxiety for pacification, even the government itself, and dissolved, by its own voluntary declaration, long before the hand of the legislature could possibly have reached it. Whether the government will now, with a wise impartiality, bring its power to bear on the only bodies on whom it can at present bear, the Brunswick Clubs of Ireland, or will limit its exertions to a task which scarcely required so great an outlay of legislation, will soon, it is to be hoped, no longer be a matter of mere conjecture. If the measure which has been proposed possess any real magic, it lies only in its perfect justice. A suspicion in the mind of a confiding and generous population at such a moment, would prove fatal. One camp

is empty: one army is disembodied: there is no good reason why the other should daringly continue to occupy its intrenchments.

The Catholic Association, during the course of the discussion, and in the body of the Bill itself, was visited with severe reprehension. The policy of this rebuke is not attempted to be attacked, or defended; it may have been one of those compromises to which public men are, by the very nature of their position, occasionally subjected; and for which the best apology will be found in the necessity to which they are compelled, for the purpose of pursuing some useful middle course, of sometimes conciliating the most opposite extremes. The distant spectator, uninfluenced by these motives, will regard the censure in a different light, and measure its justice by a far different standard. There is not, I believe, in the history of this or of the neighbouring countries, an instance of more extensive and perfect organization than the late Catholic Association. Its ramifications were as minute, as general, as connected, as the most complicated portion of the muscular system. In this country, the more prominent results, the

more obvious actions only, of the body were conspicuous. An election of Waterford or of Clare alone, evinced to the English people the existence of such a power ; but they were for the greater part as ignorant of the principle and process of the movement, as the spectator who gazes on a steam-vessel from shore without inquiring into the properties or power of steam. It was only when the effect of these powerful impulses began to be felt by the entire community, that every class at last awoke to their causes, and commenced comparing them with their effects. But as usual in such abrupt investigations, men judged only after preconceived opinions. They squared every thing to their own creed.

The Association was supposed to be a mere tumultuary body, starting up from a chaos of confused and ungovernable elements, the creature of excitation, and with views as inconsistent with *general* constitutional liberty, and especially with the order and security of the *British* constitution, as any of those sudden assemblages of Catholics and Covenanters, which were flung together at the outset of the civil wars in either country, by the first fury of our religious dissen-

tions. But this was judging rashly ; the Catholic Association was a coalition of a very different order : it had a method in its madness, and an object in its tumult, which a close observer and a constant attention only could discern ; it was not possible to combine in the same mass, greater powers of popular excitation, more undisputed sway over the popular heart, and more minute attention to the nice machinery by which the details of public business (the business of many millions of men) require to be conducted. Neither was it a mere ebullition from the rank passions and the turbulent ambition of modern times : it was of long, and slow, and patient growth ; its strength was not known, until it had been brought into direct collision with the government ; it was not even fully appreciated by the very hands which wielded it, until its temper had been brought out by hostile attack. It was then suddenly perceived, that a body had been growing up unnoticed, *without* the constitution, which might in its due season disturb from its foundations the constitution itself, co-extensive with the immense majority of the population, and reflecting, in its utmost energy,

the entire form and pressure of the popular mind.

Of the power of this singular anomaly, surviving penal enactment, and flourishing in the midst of civil restriction, it is at present unnecessary to speak: the chain which bound its strength together, the magic life by which it lived, has passed away at the voice of a still more powerful enchantment—the confident expectation of immediate and entire justice. But it may not be without its interest and utility to trace the progress of its formation, and to show, by what sure though tardy progress, the omnipotence of public opinion is ultimately, though gradually, brought to bear upon the most unmanageable questions of public policy, and in its good time to work those mighty moral changes in the national mind, which to the unphilosophic observer appear little less than miraculous.

The Irish Catholic may look back with a just pride on the honourable efforts which have so well deserved their actual remuneration, and the English constitutional Protestant read with instruction and satisfaction a lesson, that will not cease with the moment, but guide *him* also in

the future struggles he may have to make for the restitution or improvement of national rights. In such a contest nothing is small; nothing is to be despised. Catholic emancipation, it will be seen, has not been achieved by a *coup de main*; liberty has not come to the Catholic by accident; nor is it, as has been falsely surmised, the gift of a few leaders; but its seeds have, year after year, been plentifully sown in the mind of a whole people, until the appointed moment for the sure and abundant harvest had fully arrived. The moral force of patient and unceasing effort in a just cause, confiding fully in the God of justice and its own might, has been adequately proved: the certainty of final triumph, when truth and reason are the combatants, is placed beyond a doubt: and if this great lesson, and no other, had been taught by the late struggle, it would have been well worth all the sacrifice and delay. Every day, the chance of regenerating a nation by the coarse expedients of physical force is, thank God! becoming less and less. There is every day a greater confidence in the power and efficacy of mere mind; there is every day a more firm assurance in the strength

and sufficiency of unassisted reason. France and England are now the great scenes for the fullest development of this important problem. From these two countries must flow henceforth the political education of Europe. France, with greater advantages, has, within the last few years at least, made a more rapid stride in this first of human sciences ; but England has not forgotten her old renown. A nobler alliance than mere state-expediency can ever hope for, a prouder rivalry than the mere emulation of arms can ever boast of, is at length springing up between us ! To confer the greatest share of human blessing on the governed by means the most general, the most simple, and the most permanent, is surely a glorious art. An Englishman should not now have to learn it ; he ought to be the first to teach it to all mankind. The suppression of restrictions on personal liberty, on the liberty of the press, the amelioration of the elective code, new guarantees for the rights of publicity and opinion, a more popular municipal organization, are portions of the same system in France, of which the approaching emancipation of the Catholics is a still greater portion in Eng-

land. He who looks upon such improvements, such testimonies to the enlarging wisdom of the age, with local, and ephemeral, and sectarian views, sees little of the lesson or the advantage. It is in their connexion with the entire system, as precedents to be laid up in the recollection of every free citizen, that they obtain their full value. In this view, the following sketch is presented. It is a page only of a great work. Every one may find in it some evidence of these wholesome truths, some lesson applicable to his own case. But the fundamental axiom is applicable to all. In order to *be* free, there is one thing necessary, and only one—strongly, deeply, and perseveringly, to *will* it.

The History of the Catholic Association may be divided into five very distinct epochs:—I. The period of its original formation, in 1756, or rather in 1760. II. The period of its revival, in 1790. III. The period of the re-establishment of the same body, in 1809, under the for-

mer name of Committee. IV. The continuation of the same body in 1813, under the name of Board: And V., and finally, the period of its restoration, under its old designation, in 1823.* Each of these periods presents very different political phenomena; they are in curious analogy with the character of the actors, and the advancement and improvement in the spirit of the times.

* The *Letter of Mr. O'Connor to Dr. Curry*, 28th July, 1756:—"I am heartily sorry your citizens of Dublin did not invite all parties into their *Association*;"—and again, "Some thought that an *association* might be formed on our side." This was afterwards changed to Committee, Board, &c.; but the body finally reverted, in 1823, to the original name of the "*Association*."

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE LATE

CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION, &c.

CHAP. I.

The treaty of Limerick—Government of William—Beneficent intentions towards Ireland—Consequent prosperity—Jealousy of the Protestants—Barter of the agricultural and commercial rights and advantages of the country for the privilege of oppressing the Catholics—Origin of the penal code—Reign of Anne—Increased persecution—Laws preventing Catholics from acquiring property, educating their children, and freely exercising their religion—Consequent wretchedness of the country—Reign of George I.—Increased oppression of the Catholics—Evil effect on the Protestants—Extreme misery of all classes—Reign of George II.—Farther privations—Last remaining privilege, the elective franchise, withdrawn—Charter schools instituted “for the salvation of the poor Irish”—Registry bill—Expulsion of the clergy—Desolating famine, and epidemic—New and violent persecution—Total depression of the Catholics.

THE treaty of Limerick, whatever might have been its apparent purpose, whether restricted to the garrison, or extending to the entire kingdom, seems chiefly to have been designed to as-

sure to the capitulating party, a sure and immediate retreat from an inexorable and victorious enemy. The nerve and muscle of the Catholic community departed with the surrender of that city. The emigration was by thousands: an army of brave men quitted Ireland, and left to the new masters a nation of unprotected slaves. Catholic property had been long on the wane; successive sacrifices, successive confiscations, had clipped it down to a mere relic of what it once was; and though the transfer had been far more peremptory and violent in the North, the South was by no means unvisited by the same sweeping spirit of plunder and confiscation. The treaty of Limerick confirmed property as it then stood, and was not less the charter of the Protestant than the Catholic. The whole value of a text depends however on the interpreter; and the Catholic in this instance was called in to listen and to obey; the Protestant held the rod and condescended to expound.*

* That flagrant insult to public justice and national faith, the bill misnamed "A Bill for the confirmation of the articles of Limerick," in which some of the most important clauses relative to the settlement of Catholic property were omitted, has scarcely been paralleled even in the history of Ireland. Read the *original* bill, and then the *Protest*, particularly 1, 2, and 3, *reasons*. It is some consolation to find that it was signed by four bishops.

The “Væ victis!” code commenced : even in the reign of the very prince who had treated with them as equal and honourable enemies, the Catholics were trodden on as hereditary slaves. The first oppressions were timid : but the successful experiment soon taught how easy a thing it is to trample on the fallen. The last resource of the oppressed, the “arma supersunt,” was wrested from them. The plunder of intelligence, the spoliation of mind, came next ; and a prospective legislation of barbarism, a studious desolation of every thing which could tend to the intellectual improvement and elevation of the country, henceforth became the paramount object, the essential principle of national government. This perverse ingenuity in evil was soon destined to be tasked to its utmost.* The beneficent intentions

* The first four years of William’s reign, during which he governed in his *own* sense, and with great judgment and lenity, was a period of real prosperity for Ireland. The doctrines of Doctor Dopping (expelled the council) had yielded for a time to the liberal and Christian philosophy of the Bishop of Kildare and Dr. Synge.—(*Curry’s Review*, v. ii. p. 205.) It was true, indeed, that within two months after the treaty of Limerick, William, compelled it is to be hoped by his necessities (though this is a humiliating apology for a hero), had assented to the English bill, imposing a variety of oaths in direct violation of the 9th of these articles; but this iniquitous enactment had little influence on

of the sovereign were, in execution, converted into curses, or intercepted by the personal and party policy, the blighting atmosphere of Irish Protestantism, through which they had to pass. The most absolute sway of an individual tyrant would have been preferable to the multiplied tyranny of the Irish parliaments.* Powerful

the personal administration of the sovereign. The security he granted to religious dissenters of all denominations, restored industry and plenty in all things; useful arts were introduced; the land was cultivated; and a fine island, reduced to a desert by a late war, soon assumed a new face.—(*Observations, &c. by Lord Taaffe.*) The Catholics participated largely in these advantages: 233,106 acres were restored of the confiscated estates; 74,722 outlawries were reversed: they engaged extensively in the import and export trade to the continent, particularly in the linen, yarn, and frieze trade: and so great were the profits and so flourishing the condition of the merchants, that apprehensions were entertained that the estates of Protestants, by mortgage and otherwise, would soon revert to the hands of the Catholics.—(*Discourse on Ireland, in Answer to the Eton and Barnstaple Petitions*, pp. 54.57, 58.) Lands rose by the influx of capital; the peasantry acquired valuable interests; a sturdy yeomanry appeared; the very cottier was less miserable. All this, a few years after, was bartered for a shadow. The Irish Protestant sold Ireland for the maintenance of his monopoly; and the English Protestant trampled on the Catholic in order to maintain his national supremacy.

* *The Discourse on Ireland, in Answer to the Eton and Barnstaple Petitions*, suggests, as one of the best means for retaining the Catholics in their actual wretchedness, the

only in evil, to all purposes of good weak and inefficient, they forgot the country in the party,

calling of frequent parliaments. In the reign of Charles II. parliaments had fallen comparatively into disuse—Catholic interests had strengthened in proportion. These parliaments united in themselves the infamous perfection of the worst of tyrants and the basest of slaves. For the privilege of torturing the Papists (which from that day to this Protestant ascendancy has affected to consider its preserve), and which, after an ineffectual struggle, was first surrendered to them as the price for their future profligacy, in the celebrated address of the Deputy Capel, 27th August, 1695, they have universally exhibited in every page of their history the most disgraceful subserviency to the English usurpations. It is curious to place the acts of the Catholic parliament of James beside the acts of the Protestant parliament of William. Let the reader judge which of the two legislated most for the advantage of constitutional freedom and the true interests of Ireland.

Acts passed in the Catholic parliament of James.

An act declaring that the parliament of England cannot bind Ireland; and against writs and appeals to be brought for removing judgments, decrees, and sentences in Ireland to England.

An act for taking off all incapacities from the natives of this kingdom.

Acts passed in the Protestant parliaments of William and Mary.

An act, 3 William, recognised by the Irish parliament (thereby recognising the supremacy of England), for excluding Catholics from parliament.—*Lords' Journal*, v. i. p. 496.

An act restraining foreign education.—7 *Will.* c. 4.

An act for disarming Pa-

and like the freed blacks of Jamaica, were the worst taskmasters of the caste from which they

An act for *liberty of conscience*, and repealing such acts and clauses in any acts of parliament which are inconsistent with the same.

An act for the encouragement of strangers and others to inhabit and plant in this kingdom of Ireland.

An act for vesting in his Majesty the goods of *absentees*.

An act prohibiting the importation of English, Scotch, or Welsh wools into this kingdom.

An act for the advance and improvement of trade, and for the encouragement and increase of shipping and navigation, &c. &c.

pists, containing a clause rendering their spoliation, robbery, &c. legal.—7 *Will.* c. 5.

An act for banishing archbishops, priests, &c. for the purpose of extinguishing the Catholic religion. — 9 *Will.* c. 1.

An act for discouraging marriages between Catholic and Protestant.—9 *Will.* c. 5.

An act confirming (i. e. violating) the Articles of Limerick.—9 *Will.* c. 11.

The Acts for discouraging the woollen trade of Ireland, which afforded subsistence to 12,000 Protestant families in the metropolis, and 30,000 dispersed in other parts of the kingdom, passed in the English parliaments (1 *Will. and Mary*, c. 32; 4 *Will. and Mary*, c. 24; 7 and 8 *Will.*, c. 28; 9 and 10 *Will.*, c. 40), and recognised afterwards by the Irish parliament in the Bill passed 25th March, 1699.

An act completing the

sprung. In a few years this vicious engrafting of their legislation on the ancient constitution of the country put out its pestilent fruits. The country went on dying day by day, perishing limb by limb, and exhibiting in the false glare and extravagant insolence of the aristocracy, the miserable gaiety of a patient who carries death in the very flush which bears the strongest resemblance to sound health. After a series of sacrifices of the national honour, after a total surrender of the national independence,* the only re-

ruin of the woollen manufactory, and imposed with all its violations of the trial by jury, &c. by the English parliament on Ireland.—10 and 11 *Will. and Mary*, c. 10.

Such were the Protestant parliaments from the hands of which Ireland afterwards received its destinies, and such the constitution to which the monopolists of the present day still wish that we should revert! Such men and such assemblies were much more fitting to entertain the petitions of coal-heavers for the exclusion of Papists from the trade (*Commons' Journal*, v. ii. p. 209); or the infamous castration clause in the Bill for amending the laws against the growth of Popery (*O'Connor's Hist.* p. 190, *note*); or to burn Molyneux's book by the public hangman, than to legislate for the rights and interests of a free nation.

* Let the man who boasts of the courage and independence of his Protestant forefathers, and the freedom of the Protestant constitution of 1688, a constitution which, by the

turn which they received for so many and such enormous concessions of the common rights, was a larger privilege to persecute and oppress the very portion of the community from which they chiefly derived their strength and power.

The reign of William, though it had considerably curtailed the property and influence of the higher orders of the Catholics, had still left in their hands those elements by which in the ordinary course of things they might ultimately be enabled to resume both. The colony still trembled in the midst of the surrounding nation. It was not sufficient to scotch the snake, it was abso-

bye, in reference to Ireland never existed, read William's peremptory answer to the address of his English Commons on the woollen trade of Ireland, and the disgraceful and servile reply of his Irish Commons to the same. William said, "that he would do all in his power to promote the trade of *England*, and to discourage the woollen, and encourage the linen trade in *Ireland*." The Irish Commons answer, that "the woollen manufacture being the settled staple trade of *England*, from whence all foreign markets are supplied, can never be encouraged *here* for the purpose" (*Com. Journal*, v. i. p. 997); yet this very woollen manufacture was exclusively Protestant. But the sacrifice was demanded by *England*, and instantly granted by *Ireland*: for the vile surrender the Irish Protestant got a wretched equivalent;—the anti-national No Popery code. All this may have been desirable to the slaves and tyrants of the day; but let not their descendants talk of Protestantism and Ireland.

lutely necessary to kill it. Education had been prohibited :* they were debarred from the honours and distinctions of the state. It was now resolved to strike at the root from which both the desire and attainment of these advantages must necessarily spring. The Catholics had become enriched by commerce : they were yet allowed to repurchase, to enjoy, to transmit the lands which, once the property of their ancestors, had been violently wrested from them by the vicissitudes of the late revolution. A new code was necessary, of that exceeding energy and extension to all possible cases, that might search through every class of Catholic society, and after stripping them of all the property, knowledge, and public spirit, which still remained behind, might cast them out, a mere rabble, beneath the foot of their Protestant masters. One of the first acts of the new reign prohibited Catholics from purchasing any of the forfeited lands, annulled all leases that should be made to them of any part of said lands, and thus virtually excluded Catholics from any inheritance, possession, property, and in precise terms forbade them even residence on upwards of one million of acres of the land of their fore-

* 7 Will. III. c. 4 ; 9 Will. III. c. 3.

fathers. This extirpation law, for such appears to have been its object, allowed only the existence of such a number of Catholic serfs as might be sufficient for the mere purposes of tilling the soil for the use of their Protestant taskmaster. The English Tories added clauses affecting the Presbyterians; but the Irish Protestant Whig, rather than surrender his rights of torture, consented to the base sacrifice. The Sacramental Test was introduced, and half the North disfranchised; Catholic and Dissenter suffered;* and a handful of monopolists sate down on the ruins of their common country.

It was this "good law," "this excellent law," for which the nation was so much indebted, "to her Majesty's unparalleled goodness, and his Grace's sincere and happy endeavours," † which roused for the second time any thing like a feeble attempt on the part of the oppressed Catholics, to stand between their country and destruction. ‡ A few gentlemen stood forth in the

* 80,000 Scotch families had settled in Ireland after the battle of the Boyne. They were the principal linen manufacturers and exporters.—*Discourse on Ireland*, p. 33—39.

† 1 Anne, c. 23. Commons' Journals, v. iii. p. 201.

‡ A similar effort, and with as little advantage, had been made by Robert Cusack, Francis Segrave, Esqrs., and Captain Morris Eustace, in a petition on behalf of them-

breach and appealed to the sanctity of treaties, to the national honour, to the common sentiments of Christian humanity, against this iniquitous abuse of legislation. Money was collected, counsel employed, and petitions presented to both Houses, by Nicholas Lord Viscount Mountgarret; Colonels John Browne, Bourke, Nugent; Major Allen, Captain A. French, and others, comprised in the articles of Limerick and Galway, praying "to be heard by counsel, and to have a copy of said bill, and a considerable time to speak to it before it should pass." The indignant and unanswerable speeches of Sir Toby Butler, Sir Stephen Rice, and Mr. Malone, on that memorable occasion, are still on record;* but all failed. "The bill passed," says the historian, "without a dissentient voice; without the opposition or protest of a single individual to proclaim, that there was one man of righteousness in that polluted assembly to save it from the reproach of universal depravity."†

selves and others comprised in the articles of Limerick, and presented 13th Sept. 1697, when the infamous Bill for the "Confirmation of the articles" was before the House. It is needless to say, that such men, before such an assembly, could not succeed.

* They are preserved in the Appendix to Dr. Curry's Review.

† O'Connor's History of the Irish Catholics, p. 169.

To the commercial jealousy then of England, and to the base desertion, for the purpose of personal revenge of the Protestant party in Ireland, of all the grand interests of their common country, may be traced the first seeds of that desolating code, which produced a larger and more permanent share of injury to the country, than all the ravage of the wars of 1641, or the recent struggle between James and William. Pasturage gradually superseded agriculture,* the population lost its proportion to the resources of the soil: manufactures had perished, and there was no reservoir to receive the surplus of the people: idleness produced famine, and famine insurrection, and insurrection extermination; and thus, through a series of the same vicious follies and criminal experiments, the country gradually retrograded, and at last sunk. Ireland fell from her station in Europe, and Protestantism and monopoly alone flourished.

The subsequent period of the reign of Queen Anne, under the profligate viceroyalty of the Earl of Wharton, &c. was principally filled up in adding new links to the all-embracing penal chain, and moulding into a still more atrocious

* Land immediately fell, after this bill "for preventing the growth of Popery," 10 per cent. The present Emancipation Bill, it is to be hoped, will work a contrary miracle.

perfection the anti-social code, which had been comparatively mild under the reign of William. The barbarising non-education laws were rendered more precise; * the Gavel Act of Queen Anne was sharpened into more execrable efficiency; every legal evasion suggested by the commiseration and humanity of the Protestant was attempted to be cut off; and to give it a still more sweeping extension, it was rendered by a clause of peculiar malignity, retroactive. But the ingenuity of the persecutor was principally exercised in attempting the extermination of the Catholic priesthood. Partly by fraud, partly by violence, first by registering, and then by forcing on the registered the oaths of abjuration, and meeting their refusal with an accumulation of pains and penalties unknown in the code of any civilised nation, they nearly succeeded in extirpating all species of religious as well as literary instruction from the island. The pro-

* The Irish were taught in Munster the Greek and Latin languages, mathematics, history, geography, and other sciences. The existing law was not sufficient to eradicate civilization. It was enacted, that every Popish school-master, tutor, or usher, should be subject to the same penalties as the Catholic clergy, and 10*l.* was offered for their conviction. In such laws, and not in the want of well-bound Bibles, we shall find the secret of Irish barbarism.

fession of informers was declared "an honourable service" by a resolution of the House of Commons; blood-money for the capture of priests was unsparingly lavished; the whole country was debauched and demoralised by the very bodies to whom chiefly was entrusted the guardianship of public morality. It was in vain that Sir Stephen Rice, in support of the petition of Lord Kingsland, again attempted to interpose his powerful eloquence between his Catholic countrymen and these atrocious enactments. But the last consummation was now perfected. The land was reduced to a waste, yet fear and discord still reigned; solitude was every where, but peace was not yet established. Emigrations became numerous and frequent; all who could fly, fled. They left behind a government in prey to every vice, and a country the victim of every wrong. The facility of acquiring property by the violation of the natural duties of social life, was too powerful a temptation: dishonesty, treachery, and extravagance prevailed. The rewards of conformity cast at large the seeds of mutual distrust in the hearts of child and of parent. Hypocrisy and dissimulation were applauded and recompensed by the laws themselves. A nursery for young tyrants was formed in the very bosom of the legislature;

habitual oppression and habitual subserviency degraded and debased the upper classes. The lower, without rights, without land,* with scarcely a home, with nothing which truly gives country to man, basely crept over their native soil defrauded of its blessings, "the patient victims of its wrongs, the insensible spectators of its ruin," and left behind them, between the cradle and the grave, no other trace of their existence, than the memorial of calamities under which they bent, and of crimes which were assiduously taught them by their governors.†

The reign of George I. could add little to these inflictions. Human cruelty seemed exhausted. The peculiar circumstances which threw him into the hands of the Whigs, ren-

* Land—land—land—was the beginning, the middle, the end of all this. Fear against fear (says an Italian politician) is the promoter and continuer of all revolutions.

† What Lord Chesterfield said later, was equally applicable to this period. "All the causes that ever destroyed any country, conspire in this point to ruin Ireland. Premature luxury outstrips your riches, which in other countries it only accompanies; a total disregard to the public interest both in the *governed* and *governors*—a profligate and shameless avowal of private interest—a universal corruption both of morals and manners. All this is more than necessary to subvert any constitution in the world." — *Miscellaneous Works*, v. iii. p. 361.

dered still more permanent and unrelenting the twofold policy of his predecessor. Hatred to Popery—hatred to Ireland—the first confounded with slavery, the second with every thing hostile to the supremacy of England, were the guiding maxims of his cabinet and parliament. The one worked for the other; and the English monarch, forgetting he was also king of Ireland, played kingdom against kingdom, and party against party, reigning over factions, and rejoicing over victories, each of which, by a wise and just monarch, ought to have been lamented as a national defeat.

All the former tyrannies were now found consolidated into one. The records of this reign present the same indefatigable persecution of the Catholic clergy, the same injuries and insults heaped without measure on the ancient aristocracy of the country, the same anxiety to furnish new additions to the exterminating code, the same legalised violations of the rights of the subject, the same usurpations of Irish rights, which so disgracefully characterise the administration and parliaments of the preceding. But under George the First, what was originally experiment became system; and the machinery, wherever it was found defective, by the perverse vigilance of the legis-

lature, was gradually improved into the most atrocious perfection. The Protestant had achieved the work for which he was employed; and it was now time that “the broken tool” should in its due season be cast away. The Irish Protestant constitution in church and state was fully established: the Protestant had reaped and toiled; but the harvest was not for the Irishman, but the Englishman. The poisoned chalice was returned to his own lips. He had succeeded in barbarising, in demoralising, in impoverishing, the Catholic; but when he came to inspect the works of his own hands, he found that he must continue to dwell in the midst of the ruins and desolation, and have the barbarism, and vice, and poverty, which he had so madly created, for ever raging around him. He had succeeded in excluding the Catholic from all power, and for a moment held triumphant and exclusive possession of the conquest; but he was merely a *locum tenens* for a more powerful conqueror,—a jackall for the lion,—an Irish steward for an English master; and the time soon came round, when he was obliged to render up reluctantly, but immediately, even this oppressive trust. The exclusive system was turned against him: he had made the executive entirely *Protestant*; the Whigs of George I. made

it almost entirely *English*. His victory paved the way for another far easier and far more important. Popery fell, but Ireland fell with it. From this day until 1782 Ireland was a mere grovelling colony, regulated by the avarice or fears of a stranger.*

The panic of 1715, the subsequent contest on Wood's patent, the extreme wretchedness, verging to absolute famine in 1725, and the succeeding years, tended only to render still more intolerable the position of the Catholics. George II. ascended the throne, and the Catholics for a moment indulged the hope of a relaxation. But their very congratulations were contemptuously consigned to oblivion:† they

* Primate Boulter, the English manager for twenty years, gives very ample details of this system. (*Correspondence passim.*) It is true, indeed, that the open avowal and determined assertion of English supremacy in this reign, connected with other transitory circumstances of the times, such as Wood's halfpence and Swift's Letters, roused a sort of galvanic effort in this dead mass, and evinced an inclination to resist the successful encroachment of the ruling power. But the man had to deal with a child. England had only to menace the ghost of Popery, and the resistance, as of old, instantly subsided. So much for the courage and patriotism of these church and state defenders!

† Lord Delvin and others waited on the Lord Lieutenant with an address, and begged it should be transmitted to His Majesty. It was not even noticed.

were almost forgotten in the nation : they were voted by both Houses scarcely to exist. Their last remaining privilege was surreptitiously wrested from them. The Catholic freeholder was disfranchised before the Catholic could be apprised that such a bill was even before the House.* The very converts from Catholicity, who did not attest the sincerity of the change by an ultra zeal in profession and persecution, were, like the drummer at the triangle, subjected often to penalties little less than those which they were expected to inflict upon others. Charter schools were founded, by the pious and cruel Boulter, “out of concern for the *salvation* of these poor creatures, who are our fellow-subjects, and to try all possible means to bring them and theirs over to a knowledge of the *true* religion.”—(May 5, 1730.) Bills for registering the Popish clergy, for annulling all marriages, &c. between Catholics and Protestants, &c. &c. were passed. Yet was not Ireland bettered, but the malady grew chronic, and desperate; cure was considered impossible; a whole nation was deemed

* The attention of the Catholics was eluded by the heading of the bill. It was called “A Bill for *regulating*,” &c. *Disfranchisement* in all times was a *hard word*. It received the royal assent before they could even protest against it : some date this spoliation in 1715 ; others in 1727.

irreclaimable. The desolating famine of 1740, one of the most terrible in the memory of man, carrying off 400,000 persons, the fifth or sixth within twenty years, was another blessing of this exclusive legislation. Drains to absentees, the old restrictions on the woollen trade, embargoes on provisions, total want of specie, enhanced the distress; nor was the persecution of man corrected by the awful visitations of Providence. The first symptoms of returning plenty were only stimulants to new excess. The proclamation for the suppression of monastic institutions in 1744 was the sequel. A general disarming of the Catholics took place; the sanctity of domestic retreat was violated in search of priests; chapels were closed; public service and private devotion were suspended; terror reigned on all sides; and a persecution unequalled by any of the preceding spread to the most remote parts of the kingdom. The Scotch rebellion of 1745 still further increased the alarm and cruelty of the ascendancy: trampled as the Catholic was to the very earth, shorn of every element of power, deprived of even the hope or the yearning after self-redress, the natural apprehensions arising out of a guilty conscience, attributed to him intentions which were never verified by deeds, and saw, in the just sense of the

injuries which had been inflicted, the probability of a merited and universal retaliation. Measures of extreme rigour were adopted, measures of extreme atrocity were proposed. A massacre similar to that of 1641 is said to have been agitated in the privy council.* Let us hope, for the honour of our common Christianity, that such things, even in Ireland, are impossible.

The result indicated Catholic loyalty, or rather it proved Catholic depression. Their whole nature was emasculated; no yoke, however heavy, was now to be resisted: the rods were changed into whips of scorpions; and they bent their bodies in apathy or resignation to the stroke. The doubtful and insidious policy of Lord Chesterfield affected to heal these wounds. It was the entire end of his administration to carry the "*suaviter in modo*," the "*fortiter in re*," into his cruelties. He differed from his predecessors in one thing only—he enforced the sanguinary statute with a smile. His Machiavellian genius was applied with earnestness to the task; but the new laws which he recommended were unnecessary. The evil had reached its maturity; there was nothing to add: the Catholic had in mind and body be-

* O'Connor, p. 228.

32 TOTAL DEPRESSION OF THE CATHOLICS.

come emphatically the Helot. The Protestant ascendancy had no rival ; and its vigour and powers seemed assured to it for ever. In one hand it held strength, and in the other length of days. But the seeds of death were in its heart. Injustice is not destined to be eternal.

CHAP. II.

First effort of the Catholics—Dr. Curry—Mr. O'Connor—Mr. Wyse—Their characters, friendship, and exertions to rouse their countrymen—Symptoms of relaxation in the penal code—Causes of this change—Anxiously seized—Appeals to the Catholic Aristocracy—To the Catholic Clergy—Fail—Causes of this failure—Appeal to the Catholic Merchants—Succeeds—First meetings—Partial attempt at a Dublin association, by Mr. Curry—Address of the Merchants—Graciously received—Plan of Mr. Wyse for the establishment of a general Association—Adopted—First general Association of the Catholics of Ireland.

It was in the full vigour of this atrocious persecution, when all that was life and spirit seemed to have departed from the body, and the hope even of redemption had been forgotten, that Providence raised up from the midst of these calamities, three individuals who were destined to be the first forerunners of the future emancipation of their countrymen. The pulpit had caught the contagion from the legislature, and calumnies, unchecked and unanswered, against the living and the dead, were poured out weekly upon the victims of national hatred—"pereun-

tibus addita ludibria"—every insult and contumely was added to sharpen the lagging and blunted vengeance of the law. It was on one of these occasions, on the 23rd of October, 1746, that a young girl, passing from one of these sermons through the Castle-yard of Dublin, lifted up her hands in astonishment and horror, and exclaimed, "And are there any of these bloody Papists now in Dublin?" The incident excited the laughter of the bystanders; but there was one in the crowd upon whose ear it fell with a far different meaning. Dr. Curry was standing near. The sermon was purchased and read: it overflowed with invective, and with slanders. Catholicity was misrepresented with every additional circumstance of malignity, which existing prejudice and historical falsehood could combine. From that day forth he dedicated the whole weight and energies of his mind to an immortal cause. He had yet no other combatant by his side, nor the hopes of a combatant to sustain him; he stood alone in the field, and bore upon his single shield the entire burden of the conflict.

Dr. Curry in any period of Irish history would have been a remarkable man. In the present, he borrowed additional distinction from the difficulties with which he was surrounded. De-

scended from the ancient sept of the O'Corra, it was to its connexion with the struggles and calamities of Ireland that he owed the partial depression of his family. His grandfather had perished at Aughrim, and left to his father but a few shreds of the paternal inheritance. Like others exposed to similar vicissitudes at that disastrous period, he was compelled to recur to the continent for education. He studied medicine in the University of Paris, and exercised the profession with great distinction and profit on his return to Dublin. The necessities of human nature were too powerful for any legislative enactment, and despite of the searching malignity of the anti-Catholic code, the Catholic physician, like the Catholic merchant, soon rose to the most extensive practice and eminence. The intellectual and moral qualities were admirably blended and balanced in his nature. Constant at the side of the poor and rich, charitable without affectation, generous without display, he was the friend as well as the physician, the protector and adviser as well as the succourer, of the afflicted. His whole life was a series of the most judicious and active benevolence. Abroad he was unceasingly occupied in all those stirring scenes connected with human misery; at home his pen was dedicated, not to

adding by its polemical virulence a new stimulant to the mental malady of the day, but in dissipating the blindness of prejudice, in subduing the inflammation, in staying the paroxysm, of passion and persecution. No writer had a more difficult task to perform than the writer of the "Review of the Civil Wars"—"plenum opus aleæ." He trod, indeed, as he advanced upon a scarcely subsiding volcano, and met under surfaces the most flattering, treacherous gusts of flame and smoke at almost every step. He had to investigate truth obscured by a cloud of parliamentary journals; he had to pursue it through voluminous and ex-parte records; he had to rescue it from the virulence and vindicate it from the folly of the day. He has walked in the midst of this darkness, and trodden on this danger in general with a calm and unfaltering step; and if at times complaint escapes from his lips in beholding the desolation around him, it is more in the mildness and sorrow of half-suppressed expostulation that he speaks, than in the bitterness and anger of open denunciation.* To his country true, a disinterested

* In a late history, to which the praise of general impartiality has been so well awarded, the "Review of the Civil Wars" has been treated with more than usual severity. Dr. Curry merited any other than the indiscriminate cen-

politician, unswayed by the puny vanities of little men, feeling deeply his country's wrongs, but never speculating upon them for distinction and honours to himself, dearest to those who knew him best, carrying into public the conciliating charities of private life, and into private life, the firmness but not the rigour of public, Dr. Curry seemed particularly and especially framed for times the most difficult in our history,—times which more than any other required the deliberate and cautious march of a philosophic spirit,—and to have adopted, in the first awakening of the slumbering in-

sure so largely bestowed by Mr. Hallam. (*Constitutional History*, vol. ii.) Any one who will take the trouble to open a single page of Dr. Curry's work, will find that there is scarcely a statement, however remotely affecting the general colour of his argument, for which the original authorities are not quoted; and that these authorities have, in almost every instance, been intentionally and scrupulously confined to the Protestant side of the question. Dr. Curry wrote in times when partialities such as Mr. Hallam describes, would easily have been detected, and when the least objection to the claim of fair dealing would have at once neutralised the chief object which the learned contributors had principally in view. But Mr. Hallam's opinions on Irish history are far more questionable, than on the history of his own country. He has scarcely afforded Ireland a glance, and has given a recollection instead of a view.

tellect and character of the country, means of all others the most judiciously adapted to teach and marshal it the mighty way it was so soon destined to go.

With Dr. Curry was immediately associated * another man, not inferior to him in any of the moral and intellectual endowments which could qualify for the prosecution of a great

* Doctor Curry's character is well described in a letter from his friend Mr. O'Connor to Dr. Carpenter, dated from the Hermitage, Nov. 5, 1773. It breathes the strongest sentiments of attachment, and thus continues: "His heart, his studies were devoted to the good of the Catholic cause: he, in his writings and conversation planned out the conduct which Catholics ought to pursue under a lenient government, which permits their existence in the land, when the laws forbid it. He brought the wisest amongst us into his sentiments: he did more; he brought them to co-operate with him; and you may remember that to *his* solicitations were owing my poor efforts in the cause he undertook; and, indeed, undertook *alone* for some time. He overlooked the censure of some, who reproached him for officiousness in undertaking that course, uncalled and uncommissioned. With the testimony of a good conscience on his side, he went on, and opposed zeal to timidity. The consequences have surely proved that he was right. His works were well received. They have been even applauded by the most moderate of his adversaries." See also numerous other letters in the same tone, particularly those dated Feb. 9th, 1773, from the same place; 24th June, 1761, &c.

cause, and occupying, by his hereditary station in his own body, that claim to the reverence of the people and the aristocracy, which was essential to the success of a national appeal. Charles O'Connor of Ballenagar, the immediate ancestor of the present O'Connor Don, boasted a descent scarcely equalled in historic lustre by any other in the island. He came down in right line from a younger brother of Roderic O'Connor, the last king of Ireland. By the composition of Hugh O'Connor, the chieftain of the sept, with the deputy Perrot, in the time of Elizabeth, and the adoption of the party of the Queen in the Tyrone war, the Balintubber branch was sufficiently fortunate to preserve some relics of the ancient inheritance. Their subsequent fortunes were various, but all indicative of the rapid decline of the family. The last effort of the clan (they were not even noticed in the wars of James and William) was the tumultuary but successless attempt in 1641, of a few thousand followers, armed with cudgels and pikes, against the regular troops of Sir Charles Coote. The seventeenth century scattered them into a variety of branches. Of one of these, Mr. Charles O'Connor was the chief. His grand-uncle had followed the fortunes of Charles II. into exile ; was restored to his family

domains by the act of settlement; was a major in the service of James at the Revolution; and ultimately died a prisoner in the castle of Chester. His estate, on the point of being forfeited by the iniquitous character of rebellion attributed to this contest, after a great deal of difficulty, was finally restored by the commissioners of claims.

But, as in most other cases of Catholic property, the scar of wrong and confiscation still remained behind. Eight or nine hundred acres of bad land was all that had been rescued from the wreck. It was encumbered with innumerable chancery claims, arising from a variety of claimants during its alienation from the family, and was ultimately borne down by dilapidation and debt. "Mr. O'Connor's birth," says his historian, "in an obscure cottage at Kilmacatranry in the county of Sligo, is the best indication how much the fortunes of his house had fallen at the commencement of the eighteenth century."

Dr. Curry had very considerable academical advantages over Mr. O'Connor: the latter was indebted for the first elements of his education to the scanty and piecemeal instruction of a few itinerant friars, who received shelter by the fire-side of his hospitable father. But he had been gifted with a naturally felicitous organization,

which soon put to its utmost value the meagre assistance he had received. His application, favoured by the political necessities which excluded him from the sphere in which birth would have, under other circumstances, placed him, was uninterrupted, well regulated, and intense; his knowledge of the languages and history extensive; of the language, history, and antiquities of his own country, profound; a clear reasoner, a pleasing rather than a vigorous writer; calm, dispassionate, sometimes eloquent; seldom trespassing on the laws of good taste, and, in a political as well as a literary sense, under the immediate guidance of a most correct judgment; no other man could, with more propriety at that time, be selected from the body to give an extensive impulse to the labours of Dr. Curry. His moral qualities if possible exceeded in their importance to the cause, which he had solemnly and earnestly undertaken, those high intellectual endowments to which we have just referred. He was truly and sacredly devoted to his country. Like his friend's, the entire object of his long life seems to have been to redeem it, from the self-ignorance, the blind impolicy, the national degradation, to which it had been reduced. In this lofty and noble vocation, no man ever put out, with more perfect abandonment of

all unworthy motive, the valuable gifts which he had received. His entire correspondence breathes of the public only—self is almost forgotten. The gold was not alloyed by the base dross; there was no intrigue, there was no vanity. His modesty was equal to his merit: “A man of more unassuming manners,” says his historian, “of greater simplicity of manners, or gentler deportment, never existed. He cherished religion as the best gift of Heaven, and benevolence and truth amongst the first moral virtues; he pursued industry and practised economy, as the parents of hospitality and generosity. Though his income was at all times scanty and limited, though embarrassed by the mercantile disappointments of a beloved son, and the expenses of a bill of discovery filed against himself, his purse was never closed against the demands of public service, or the calls of individual distress: his benign disposition and native dignity, the *ingenita nobilitas* of Tacitus, beamed in the expressive sweetness and placid serenity of his countenance. His patriarchal appearance in his more advanced years, attracted the notice and commanded the respect and veneration of all who beheld him. The allusion of Goldsmith to the country clergyman was verified in his person: the children followed him ‘to pluck his

mantle and to share his smile.' He lived to a great age, and every day of it was devoted to vindicating the honour, illustrating the antiquities, and promoting the redemption, of his oppressed country." *

The third co-operator in this national work was Mr. Wyse, of the Manor of St. John, the descendant of an English family, which had accompanied the Earl Strongbow to Waterford, and had continued settled in that country, since the period of the first invasion. The small portion of the originally extensive estates which had been rescued from three successive confiscations, still pointed him out to the persecution of local and personal enemies : he came to this struggle with feelings not less roused by the home experience of injury and wrong than Mr. O'Connor ; but he wanted somewhat of the cool discretion and judicious temperance which distinguished his fellow-labourer. The early portion of his life had been spent abroad, and his sons were employed in the service of foreign powers. On his return to his own country, indignant at the daily contumelies which were heaped upon the gentry, he abstained altogether from all intercourse with his persecutors. He lived in seclusion, and turned his attention to

* O'Connor, p. 240.

the improvement of his estates. Manufactories, for which he obtained with difficulty, even the connivance of government, were attempted to be introduced. His speculative and ardent spirit, impatient of repose, miscalculated the times in which he lived, and the men with whom he had to deal. The anti-Popery spirit came between the country and every improvement ; every exertion for the advancement of its civilization, in which a Papist could be concerned, failed. Galled and disappointed, in a moment of despondency and disgust, a correspondence, at first casual, afterwards frequent and sustained, with Mr. O'Connor, opened to him new and ampler views. He seized them with avidity ; he saw there were still hopes for Ireland ; he girt himself up to give every assistance to the sacred cause which an oppressed man had still in his power. But, far more impetuous than his associates, he disdained to conciliate : he roused, he enkindled, but was little fitted or little inclined to calm. His habits were not literary, but active ; little content with obliterating Protestant prejudice, he thought a more important task still remained behind—the compressing into shape and system the scattered energies of his Catholic countrymen. To that purpose, with the firmness of a will not easily to be swayed from its object,

he bent the energies of a bold and earnest spirit. To him and to Dr. Curry the Catholic body owe the first seeds of that great confederacy, which in after times was destined, through the labours of mightier men, to embrace the entire island. But his fate was not so tranquil as that of either of his companions. He had rendered himself a far more conspicuous mark to the hostility of the persecutor. His days were embittered and endangered by every ingenious application of the penal code which his enemies could devise ; and after successively proving in his own person the inflictions of the gavel act, and of the disarming act, the ingenious malignity of the discoverer, the secret conspiracy of the Protestant minister, the treacherous calumny of the informer, he sunk broken-hearted into the grave, leaving it as an injunction in his last will to his children, “ that they should with all convenient speed sell the remainder of their hereditary property, (a portion of which had already been disposed of for that purpose,) and seek out some other country, where they might worship God like other men in peace, and should not be persecuted for manfully observing, in the open day, the religion of their hearts, and the dictates of an honest conscience.”

To these three gentlemen were now com-

mitted the future destinies of their country ; but a long period elapsed before they could fully embody their resolutions into practice. A series of fortunate events at last favoured their exertions, and brought them into efficient and useful action. The anniversary sermons of Christ-Church had first excited the dormant intelligence of Dr. Curry ; a similar circumstance produced a nearly corresponding effect on Mr. O'Connor. The "Appeal" of Sir Richard Cox, who charged Lucas with being a Papist because he was a patriot,* roused in the mind of

* It is a curious thing to compare the same spirit under different circumstances. This irreclaimable faction was at all times the same ; a consistent villifier of every exertion for the freedom or regeneration of Ireland. Dr. Lucas, aware probably of the ignorance and fanaticism of his times, so far from allowing any predilection for Popery to appear in his pages, courted a disgraceful popularity in his *Barber's Letters* (p. 16. *Dublin, 1747*), by the most wanton vituperation of a fallen people. But it was sufficient that he had raised his voice against the encroachments of England, and the flagrant corruption and misrule of her Irish proconsuls, to represent his *popular* opinions, with the usual perverse spirit of the party, as subservient "to the slavish doctrines of Popery, and intended only as an insidious plan for the introduction of the Pretender." Similar weapons (and let this be a consolation to the calumniated patriots of the present day) were wielded against Mollyneux's *Case of Ireland*, a noble vindication of Irish independence ; against

O'Connor, till that moment secluded from all public affairs, a sudden spirit of indignation. In a few days, under the fictitious name of a Protestant Dissenter, he published his "Counter Appeal." The style was captivating, the arguments strong, the author unknown.* The work was read, and applauded amongst the Protestants. Amongst the Catholics it obtained for O'Connor the friendship of Dr. Curry. A milder spirit had arisen. Cruelty had subsided with fear. The apprehensions of a change in the act of settlement, the idle belief that the Catholics still looked to its reversal, the possibility of the Pretender's success, were dissipated

Swift's intrepid opposition to the base coinage of Wood; and at an earlier period against every resistance of the Church of England to the tyranny of the house of Stuart. So true it is, that in the mouth of the monopolist,—“No Popery” has at all times had but one meaning—“No correction,”—“No improvement,”—“No reform!” and that liberty itself, by an audacious abuse, has been called in to do the work of tyranny and oppression. The refractory spirit of the Irish Commons in 1753 was characterised by the same imputation. Scarcely a session has passed, in which it has not been applied, by the Kenyons and Winchilseas of the day, with the same propriety to their public-spirited adversaries.

* Popish tracts were excluded by fathers of families from their houses, with a scrupulosity not always extended to works of the most direct immoral tendency.

by his defeat in Scotland, and still more effectually by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. The subsequent contest in 1753, between Primate Stone and Lord Shannon, relative to the surplus then in the treasury, notwithstanding the exertions of the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Chesterfield, to divert the public mind from the struggle to its more congenial habits of persecution, produced considerable improvement in opinion, and for the first time rekindled, by the passion which it excited for public discussion, some recollection of the name of country. The rejection of the Earl of Limerick's celebrated bill for the registry of priests, pursuant to 2nd of Anne, by a majority of two, in consequence, singular to say, of the strong opposition of the bishops, was another triumph, and, under the circumstances, was considered as no questionable pledge of the increasing liberality of the church and of the government.* It was in this interval of doubtful repose that Mr. O'Connor and Dr. Curry first conceived the hope of rousing into some sense of their debased condition, their apathetic

* The bill, however, the very next year, 1757, through the exertions of the same Lord Limerick (then Lord Clanbrasil), passed both houses. It was fortunately quashed (no unusual measure in this violent government) by the authority of the privy council.

countrymen. They were instantly joined by Mr. Wyse. But these fathers of the cause had many and nearly insurmountable difficulties, to contend with. They first looked to the Aristocracy, with whom both by habits and birth they were more intimately associated, and subsequently, though with less expectation of concurrence, to the Clergy. The people were still, if I may so express it, in abeyance;—buried in flat and perfect slavery; stripped of every right; flung naked out on the surface of the earth, like animals created only for the service and cruelties of their masters;—not only were they passed over in all late acts of a coercive tendency, but they were not even invoked by the sympathy or hopes of their regenerators. But from the Clergy and Aristocracy they received nothing but coolness, and sneers, and disappointments. The Aristocracy of the present day may smile, in their bold declarations for popular rights, and their strenuous support of popular efforts, at the timidity of their ancestors; but the times of which we speak were of a far different complexion. They had made large and painful sacrifices, not merely of all political pre-eminence, of all the honour, power, emolument, consequent upon their station, but of considerable portions of their hereditary estates: the opera-

tion of a long series of legislative severities had crumbled away, fragment by fragment the miserable pittance which civil war or domestic rapacity had spared; the constant habit of shrinking from public notice, the prudence requisite to walk amongst the snares, with which they were encircled, and the stern and calamitous lessons taught by a long-continued experience, had concurred with the actual grievance, in altogether congealing every sentiment of political energy or enthusiasm. Nor is the more distant or philosophic spectator altogether entitled to censure this conduct. It would be railing against the inscrutable laws of our moral being; it would be blaspheming against human nature itself!

The contempt, with which their very felicitations had been received, and the apprehension which they entertained of exciting the attention of either the administration, or the legislature, at all times synonymous with renewed persecution, might almost serve to justify such feelings. They had some reason to dread that the very clanking of their chains might arouse their keeper from his slumber, and tend only to furnish him with a new pretext to rivet them more closely. Nor were they unaffected by a larger portion than usual of the ordinary defects of their order. They

had all the hereditary apathy incidental to their separated condition, to their want of communication, and to that conviction justifiable, no doubt, by their unconquerable fidelity, through all changes of fortune, to the faith of their fathers, that to them in a pre-eminent degree appertained all superiority and leadership amongst their own body. The fear lest they might by any immixture with the people compromise this station, kept them, not then only, but in many after periods of general danger and difficulty, criminally absent from the councils of the people. A Roman Catholic peer or gentleman of fortune and family, in that day, was compelled to feed on the bitter bread of public and private wrong in secret: the moment he passed the threshold of his own castle or demesne, the shaft of scorn from the lowest hand was levelled at him: he found himself encircled by a fictitious aristocracy, without any of those real ingredients of distinction which take away some portion of pain from such superiorities: it was the base, and the vile, and the malignant, who represented it; its honours were not of its own creation: it was a favoured and suddenly elevated caste, ruling and oppressing wherever it could find victims, with all the tyranny and caprice of a sudden favourite. In all the relations of life, how-

ever trifling, he was tauntingly reminded of an inferiority, which he could never recognise in his own heart, and against which even the tamest spirit revolted with a stifled but burning indignation. His duties were rendered almost impossible: he was told to love his country, and he was deprived of all that makes a country to man: he was told to love his king, and his king never appeared to him, but through the medium of vindictive and corrupt ministers, calling for the sacrifice of the rights and happiness of his subjects, and feeding and revelling on their miseries and pains. He saw in every human being around him either an enemy, or a fellow-sufferer: he found the bondsman accompanying him into the inmost recesses of private life; home was made false and insecure: he knew not scarcely whether he nourished serpents, or children: he was not certain whether the wife who lay in his bosom and shared his cup to-night, might not be the first to point the discoverer to his hearth in the morning: he knew that these things had been done; and above all, he knew that the law itself, the enduring and inexorable law, was the teacher of all this, and that its chief executioner was the very government whom, with something like a bitter irony, he was called on to implore and

to conciliate for relief. Such a man had but one alternative; either to fly into the ranks of an enemy, as thousands had done to the brigades of France, of Austria, and Sardinia, and thus spurn back the intolerable weight which had oppressed him on its authors; or else to sit down, and to shut out, by a complete solitude, even the visage of his persecutor, and to wait in sullen patience until death, and a merciful Providence should finally liberate him from the prison and the chain.

The Clergy were similarly situated: they were pious, and moral, and resigned. Their pastoral courage, their pastoral tenderness, is beyond all praise: they had shared, with a still loftier and unflinching fortitude, in the same personal persecutions, in the same wrongs, in the same privations, with the gentry. They too had their rewarding influence, but it was infinitely more deep and lasting than any which could be attained by the other classes of the body. They who know how deeply prized is the slightest word, the most transient smile, in the hour of desertion and sickness—they who know what it is to have drunk out of the same chalice the same searching draught of misfortune and pain—they who know what it is to have a bosom to repose on when fatigued, and a staff to lean

on when faltering, and a counsellor to guide in doubt and in peril, will easily comprehend the all-commanding influence of that communion which then existed between the Catholic clergy and the Catholic laity of Ireland. Skelton has been admired for the Christian mildness with which he endured the obscurity and rudeness of a distant village. There were many Skeltons amongst the Catholic clergy, educated in the splendid courts and the learned halls of the continent, accustomed as much as he was to the elegant aspirings, and the consoling enjoyments of a studious and dignified leisure; but unlike Skelton, they dwelt not in the tranquil shadow of a protecting and paternal government but in the midst of the shadow of death, with the inquisitor eye of a persecuting code about their paths; teaching in the very sight of the gibbet, and often laying down their lives in testimony of the doctrines which they taught, with a calmness, a constancy, an exultation, which would have dignified even a primitive Christian, and in wilds and wastes, pathless and houseless, whose names, in more than one instance, were scarcely known to the very legislators who sought their blood. But their courage, though of the highest temper, was purely passive. Forced by the impolicy of the legislature abroad, they had,

in many instances, been educated under the immediate influence of the court and principles of the Stuarts. The passive obedience doctrines of that despotic school had been sanctified in their minds by every stirring circumstance of former sacrifice, and by every additional stimulant of actual suffering and wrong. They trembled at the possibility of plunging still more deeply, and inextricably into persecution, the suffering church of Ireland. They bowed their heads to the passing visitation, to the out-poured vial, to the depths of the wisdom of the Omniscient and the Almighty God. They would not risk *le bien pour le mieux*; deeming even an interval of suffering, leniency, and an absence of pain, repose. Under the crumbling day-by-day persecution, they sat humbled and inert. It required nothing less than the sword of the Exterminator to arouse them from their sleep. Even after the relaxation of the penal laws had taken place, it was a long time * before

* A singular instance occurred of this feeling in one of the principal towns of Ireland after the concessions of ninety-three. The pastor of one of the largest parishes in the city had never been seen in the public promenade. For forty years he had lived in the utmost exclusion from Protestant eyes, shielding himself from persecution under his silence and obscurity. But the influence of the persecution remained after the persecution itself had passed away. A friend induced him, for

they could recover their original stature. By long bending, they had become bent; their mind, like a human body long confined within too small a prison, had been doubled up within them, and refused itself to the free functions of other citizens. The scourge had ceased, and the fetter had been unlocked; but for years afterwards the scar and the brand remained behind.

It may easily be conceived that with such elements little could be hoped for Ireland, until a more favourable conjunction of public and private circumstances should chance to arise. In the very first effort, for the redemption of the Catholic, every opposition was made to the regenerators: nor is it probable that, for many years after, any similar attempt would have proved successful, had not, in a quarter least suspected of any disposition to such coalition, new materials for the nucleus of the future body offered themselves nearly formed to their hands. The Aristocracy and Clergy not only

the first time, a little after the bill had passed, to visit the rest of the town. He appeared amongst his fellow-citizens as an intruder, and shrunk back to his retreat the moment he was allowed. It was with difficulty, and on the most urgent occasions only, he could be prevailed on to quit it. Seldom he appeared on the walk afterwards, and it was always with the averted eyes, and the faltering step of a slave.

had refused all aid collectively and individually to the projected measures, but had strongly deprecated all efforts for redress. Their exertions, natural under the circumstances, were fortunately inefficient. A third body arose, if not more weighty in intrinsic consequence and influence, from the strong elements of activity and energy which had been generated within them by their daily habits, infinitely more intelligent and powerful. Whilst the estates of the Aristocracy were mouldering away by the slow, but certain attrition of the gavel act, there was gradually rising behind them, and in some instances taking their place, a new order of men, enriched by commerce, unimpovertished by the rebellion of their children, un plundered by legal inquiry, and tolerated, even in their advancing affluence, by the wants and necessities of their enemies themselves. The progress of this new element of power, in the midst of general depression, did not escape the sagacity of Lord Chesterfield : he had long perceived this germ of Catholic independence ; but taking, with a precipitation familiar to statesmen, effects for causes, he attempted to hem in with difficulty the acquisition, and to render precarious the enjoyment of Catholic wealth. With that deceitful policy characteristic of his entire admi-

nistration, he did not recur to open denunciation, or the rude mechanism of a penal law, whose inefficiency, at least in affairs of property, is generally in the direct ratio of its violence; but under the specious pretext of enlarging the limits of acquisition, and of multiplying the choice of investiture, he originated the plan for the repeal of the existing prohibitory statute against purchasing estates of freehold and inheritance, still leaving such estates, as previously, exposed to the searching visitation of the existing law. He was well aware of the predilection for landed security amongst all capitalists, a predilection then conspicuous in Ireland, as in every country whose chief manufacture is the working of the soil; and he entertained a hope, which probably for a time would have been justified by experience, that the Catholic merchants (many of them anxious to repurchase their family estates) would at once have transferred their profits to such purchases, and thus have exposed themselves anew to the embracing injuries of the gavel act, to bills of discovery, and perhaps after a series of successive vexations, to the final reversion of their properties to Protestants. By a fortunate concurrence of circumstances, Lord Chesterfield was recalled; and the Catholic merchant drawing new strength from his very

persecutions, treasured up those seeds of wealth, industry, knowledge, and public spirit, which, though unnoticed, were not the less flourishing, and were destined in due season to bring forth fruits full of happiness and blessing to the entire country.

To this small but intelligent body of men, after a series of disappointments in their various applications to the aristocracy and the clergy, the three gentlemen above-mentioned were at last obliged to turn. "Pride," says Mr. O'Connor to Dr. Curry, in his letter of the 28th of July, 1756, "though no disaffection, is at the bottom of this affair." But this pride was insurmountable. The miserable ambition of leadership, of being head-slave, of being chief-turnkey to the prison, dictated and directed all their counsels. "He who would take the lead, and who might be entitled to take it, would at the same time be perhaps objected to for presumption and insufficiency."—Misunderstandings grew, and were multiplied. "The scuffle of the most contrary opinions, now dragging one way, now another," interfered.* The Catholics appeared sunk in irre-

* See Mr. O'Connor's correspondence with Dr. Curry, July 28th and Aug. 20th, 1756. In the latter of these communications he treats the aristocracy with singular indulgence. After having referred to "their explicit and praise-

trievable apathy, predestined to hopeless and irredeemable bondage, reconciled to their Helotism; and gradually demoralising with their gradual oppression, were at last esteemed incapable, like the Greeks of a few years past, of effectually throwing it off. A few men and a few years changed all this. The Catholics too had their Rigas and their Ypsilantis; men whose deeds were not equal to their wishes, but who rendered the first of services to an enslaved country, turning its eyes inward on its own miseries, and teaching it how best with its own right hand it might render such services in the appointed season to itself.

Their first resolution, therefore, was to strike directly at the obstacles which most impeded

worthy conduct in *former* times," and apologising for their timidity and indolence on the ground of their considering "that the *present* time was not the most proper for the consideration of the subject proposed to them," he continues, "Let me suppose—let me convince myself, that they saw further into the expediency or in expediency of the step proposed (*the address*) than you or I did, and yet our end is the same, though our means may be different." A little lower down, he gives the objections which might, and which probably were, urged by the anti-addressers. They are plausible enough, and precisely of the same colour as those which have long been and are still urged by the "cautious and temperate of the body almost every day."

their march in their own body; and though connected with the aristocracy itself, and supposed to be imbued with its principles, to deliver their country from that incubus of aristocratic thralldom which kept them sunk in silence and despair. There was no People to appeal to; the body of the nation still slumbered; but they had that knot of high-spirited commercial men, from whom all the lights of freedom and instruction in a state generally emanate, and have always emanated, in every country not absolutely and irretrievably a despotism. Constitutions are the children of quiet and almost imperceptible moral revolutions. The great epochs which mark them to the readers of history, are only the final and definitive expression of opinions and feelings which have been growing up under the surface of the state for many years before. These are the revolutions which endure; they have not been suddenly brought forth in pangs and convulsion on the wild or the mountain, but peaceably cradled and patiently nursed in the communion of man with man, in the combination of mind with mind, in thronged and in thriving cities. An *Association* was planned for the management of Catholic concerns. It had sprung out of the rejection of the suggestions of the circular letter,

communicated at first to the aristocracy and clergy. But the very circumstances (as Mr. O'Connor fully explains them in his correspondence) which produced this rejection, limited the original society to very few. The merchants of Dublin were its first, and for a time its sole members. It was the first collection of individual Catholics, since the Revolution, who dared to meet and consult on Catholic affairs. So far it deserves the gratitude and thanks of posterity : it was much in such times to have commenced at all. But its organization was incomplete ; its exertions timid. The gentry and clergy not only kept themselves cautiously and reprehensibly aloof, and scorned all connexion with its members, but laughed contemptuously at its labours, and interposed every obstacle to prevent, to discourage, to neutralise its success.

The result, as might be expected, was for a time inoperative and unproductive. But its founders did not despair. The Address which had been drawn up previous to the formation of this association, expressive of the loyalty of Roman Catholic gentlemen, merchants, and citizens of Dublin, was soon signed by four hundred respectable names, and presented to Mr. Ponsonby, the speaker of the House of Commons, by two gentlemen of the Catholic

body, Mr. Antony M'Dermott and Mr. John Crompt, the depression and degradation of the body being at that time such, that they dared not venture to wait upon the Lord Lieutenant, or to present the address in person.

This address of 1759, or rather the answer which was returned to it, was undoubtedly the first positive signal of the future emancipation of the Catholics, and may be considered the outset of that magnificent cause, which, whether the intellectual might of its advocates, the numerous splendid names, each recommended to posterity by achievements of the highest political benefit to their country, with which it is connected, or the gradual awakening of an entire people to the knowledge and enlivening sentiment of their own rights and grievances, be regarded, was unquestionably one amongst the first of those great moral revolutions which illustrate and dignify the pages of recent history, and which in the midst of the many grounds which a patriot has for despondence in the corruptions which surround him, leave him still the hope that there is a redeeming spirit in our institutions, which will always re-assert its power, and purify them, certainly though slowly, with whatever vices and abuses

they may be temporarily overgrown. After a long delay and suspense, during which the addressers had almost repented of their effort, and the anti-addressers had already begun to triumph in this compensation to their wounded pride, over the mortification and disappointment of their opponents, an answer was at last returned, on the 10th of December, by the Lord Lieutenant through the Speaker to Mr. M'Dermott, and afterwards ordered to be inserted in the Irish Gazette. It conveyed "assurances that the zeal and attachment which the Catholics professed, could never be more seasonably manifested than in the present conjuncture" (Lord Delvin was not answered in this manner), "and that as long as they conducted themselves with duty and affection, they could not fail to receive his Majesty's protection." These were the first words of encouragement given by the House of Hanover to its oppressed Irish subjects. They diffused universal joy. Addresses poured in from all sides; but so debased by the most servile adulation of the reigning powers, and by ungrateful vituperation of the French, to whom from the treaty of Limerick up to that hour, they were indebted for every benefit;—the exile for his home;—the scholar for his education;—their

ancient and decayed aristocracy for commissions in the army for their younger sons ; *—that their freer descendants blush in reading the disgraceful record, and turn aside in disgust, from the melancholy evidence of the corrupting and enduring influences of a long-continued state of slavery.†

If the anti-addressers till this event had testified how much indisposed they were to the

* Par des calculs et recherches faites au Bureau de la Guerre, on a trouvé, qu'il y avait eu, depuis l'arrivée des troupes Irlandaises en Paris en 1691 jusqu'en 1745 que se donna la bataille de Fontenoy, plus de 450,000 Irlandais morts au service de la France.—*Abbé M'Geoghegan, Hist. d'Irlande, t. 3. p. 754.*

† Mr. O'Connor, in his letter of Dec. 1759, does not spare these addressers. "I return to the addressers from the remote cities : some of these gentlemen scold those unfortunate ancestors whom you have so well defended ; others, again, scold the French nation, who from *them* at least have deserved better quarters. France, the asylum of our poor fugitives, lay and clerical, for seventy years past !—should that nation for the future stop up those fountains from which our exiles derived their existence, or should they open their charity to more deserving objects, would they be much to blame ?" But the Catholic was still essentially a slave. "Some," says Mr. O'Connor a little lower, "declare themselves so happy!! as to require a revolution in their private oppressed state, as little as they do a revolution in government."

more active portion of their body, the success of their last measures fully determined their total separation. Their sagacity was questioned, their pride was deeply hurt. They seceded altogether from "the merchants;" and from thenceforth refused all co-operation whatever with the Association.

But the impulse which had just been given would have subsided probably in the very circumstances which had given it birth, had not the more judicious leaders of this small but independent party taken advantage of so unexpected a circumstance to give it a permanent and practical form. Nothing could be done without a working and efficient machinery. The spirit was good, but it should not be suffered to escape in idle and useless acclamations. They were only at the beginning of a struggle, which demanded combination and concert as well as determination. Circumstances favoured the execution of a project which had suggested itself more than once in the course of their proceedings. The address just alluded to had been originally discussed amongst a few individuals in private houses.* The number of persons who approved

* The first address (I believe Lord Delvin's) was the original cause of this feud. In Primate Boulter's letters may

of these proceedings gradually increased, the discussion was transferred to a more public apartment, and the address was finally drawn up, and passed in a series of public, though separate meetings, at which were permitted to assist whatever persons had the courage and independence to present themselves to the deliberation. Mr. Wyse, who had taken an active part in all these transactions, first seized these elements, and combined them into lasting utility. To him the Catholic body is indebted for the first uniform or general plan of a convention or association. He fully saw (as appears from his private correspondence) its numerous inconveniencies, but he was still more deeply impressed with its absolute necessity. He

be seen the numerous jealousies, which even then divided the Catholic body, and through various channels have transmitted their poison very nearly to our own time. The first use the captive usually made of the least relaxation in his punishment was to strike his fellow captive with his chains. The aristocracy, however, had no share in the original formation of this address. It was first proposed and passed, by Mr. O'Connor, at a meeting of citizens in the Globe tavern, Essex Street. It has been preserved in the *Appendix to Lord Taaffe's Observations on Ireland*. The original of the plan for the establishment of the Association is in Mr. Wyse's hand-writing in Stowe Library. It has been published by Plowden (vol. ii. *Hist. Review*).

communicated with Dr. Curry and Mr. O'Connor; he met with their concurrence; but he carried his views far beyond either—he attempted to embrace the People. He conceived the project of a great representative body, formed on general and permanent principles, and which, far from affecting to limit its representation to the interests of the aristocratic class, or to that of the merchants only, should extend its delegation to every rank of the community. The plan, after having been matured in solitude, was finally submitted to the few gentlemen Mr. Wyse could collect together in Dublin, in March and April, 1760. The first meetings were held in the Elephant tavern, Essex Street. Not more than three or four were found willing to attend them. The walls of Rome were not yet built; a child could leap over the intrenchments. In how few years these three or four persons were destined to increase to hundreds, the hundreds to thousands, the thousands to millions, until they at last took in an entire people! At one of these meetings Mr. Wyse proposed his plan. It was adopted with some slight alterations. The reader will see later how far it formed the principle of the various associations, boards, and committees, which were afterwards successively adopted. It particularly suggested the improved

one of 1793. In the metropolis it was carried into immediate effect. Dr. Curry was elected delegate for one of the parishes, and men every way meriting the confidence of the body by their virtues and their talents were soon chosen for the others. But in the country, Mr. Wyse soon discovered he had calculated much too highly on the energy and intelligence of his countrymen. Secrecy was still requisite even in the metropolis. This, with the general apprehensions then prevalent in the island, from the invasion of Monsieur Thurot, rendered it extremely difficult to bring the project into general play. Mr. Wyse, however, and the few other country gentlemen who were elected for the counties, together with the representatives of Dublin, met at last in committee, and took upon themselves the management of Catholic affairs, in which they had been now so long, and so basely deserted by the rest of the aristocracy.

To Mr. Wyse, and to Dr. Curry in concurrence with him, the Catholics are thus indebted for the establishment of their first association; and "if the obstacles they had to encounter," says a late writer,* whose researches and patriotism are fully commensurate to the hereditary

* O'Connor.—*History of the Irish Catholics*, vol. i. p. 262.

honours of his name, “ and the dangers they had to risk, be fairly estimated by the circumstances of the times—the depression of the body—the opposition of the gentry—and the vigilance of their enemies—it will be acknowledged that their abilities, perseverance, and courage, are above all praise; and that their memories should be embalmed in the eternal gratitude of their countrymen.”

CHAP. III.

Accession of George III.—Address of the Catholics of Ireland—Separate address of the Catholic Aristocracy and Clergy—The Remonstrance of grievances—Dissensions and divisions of the Catholic body—Remonstrants and Antiremonstrants—Lord Trimleston—Lord Taaffe—Failure of the Remonstrance—Despondency of the Catholics—Causes thereof—Lord Halifax succeeded by Lord Townsend—Hopes of the Catholics—Efforts against the Quarterage, &c.—Establishment of a Catholic fund—Inertness of the first Committee or Association—Causes which produced it—Gradual dissolution—Renewal under Lord Kenmare—First concessions to the Catholics—Bill of 1776.

ON the accession of George III. new and brighter prospects opened to the Catholics: the sovereign, who professed himself “the friend of religious toleration, and the guardian of the civil and religious rights of his subjects,” gave unquestionably just grounds for hope. The General Committee was indefatigable in its labours. Mr. O’Conor, in pursuance to their vote, drew up an “*Address to the King*,” which was approved of, and signed in almost every part of the country. Not less than six hundred names were annexed; a number which then excited the ut-

most astonishment, but which now can be furnished by any one county in Ireland. The addressers, emboldened by success, called it the Address of the Roman Catholics of Ireland. But the lords and clergy, particularly the nobility of Meath and Kildare, still inexorable, refused not merely their approbation but their concurrence.* They held a separate meeting at Trim, and passed a separate address. Both were accepted, and both inserted in the Gazette. But other seeds of discord were soon cast amongst them. The history of the cele-

* Mr. O'Connor was not a little affected by the conduct of both. "Despair, or pride, or indifference," said he, "or unmeaning motives," (the history of so many other refusals of the kind) "have arrested their hands, and with these we must bear as with the other moral evils of life. Will it be overlooked, that our *ecclesiastics* to a man have been entirely passive in the prosecution of this measure?" (*Letter, Feb. 6th, 1761, to Dr. Curry.*) Mr. O'Connor attributes their reluctance to the apprehension of Lord Clanbrasil's bill still hanging over them; but the coyness, evinced at that period and very often since, was a habit, originating rather from a long-continued series of suffering, than the result of any particular measure in the actual contemplation of parliament. For many years afterwards the clergy stood altogether aloof from the people. The late Association was the first to operate a perfect and entire consolidation of action as well as interest amongst all classes of the Catholic community.

brated *Remonstrance* evinces with what rank fertility they soon sprung up, and how bitter were the fruits which they subsequently bore to the country.

The manner in which the Address to the King had been received, and the ameliorated spirit perceptible in the official communications of the government, induced the Catholics to advance one step further. They had congratulated his Majesty on his accession, and testified the lively hope they entertained of future benefit from the benignant influence of his reign. They now turned their eyes upon themselves, and remodelling a detailed statement of their grievances, prepared a short time previous to the decease of the late king, but which had not been presented in consequence of the boldness of its tone, and the habitual apprehensions of the Catholics, they resolved, that without further delay it should be submitted to the kind consideration of his Majesty. This measure brought into action, and subsequently into direct collision,* two men,

* "The Remonstrance," as this celebrated address was termed, was opposed on the vaguest pretexts. The Committee was charged with indirect communications with foreign powers, and applications to parliament for leave to purchase under the Gavel act, an implied recognition on the part of Catholics of the justice of that iniquitous statute. The *real* grounds

whose contrasted and contending characters left for many years after very perceptible traces behind them, in the counsels and conduct of the Roman Catholics.

Both were of the noblest descent; both of the highest personal character; both of the most distinguished consideration in their own body. But here the resemblance ends: in every other particular no two men could be more decidedly opposite. Lord Trimleston had strong and natural hereditary claims to the gratitude of the Catholics. The Catholics were not ungrateful to Lord Trimleston; they gave him at an early period of their struggle the immediate direction of their affairs, the control and management of their funds, and constituted him their official organ in all their communications with government. His private character was strongly coloured by the vices and virtues of his order. It has often been remarked, and often with such justice as to render the remark general, that the Catholic peer is, *ex necessitate rei*, from habit

are to be found in the old hostility between the two orders, and the habitual alarms and apprehensions of the landed proprietors. They had suffered much, and had much more to risk than the merchants. Besides, Lord Trimleston had his *own* address to propose, a good ground at any time for opposition to a *rival's*.

if not from principle, a Tory. The seclusion to which he is compelled by the laws, and the barrier interposed between him and a general and equal communication with other classes of his fellow-subjects, undoubtedly disposes to the slow secretion of a great deal of aristocratic pride, which more or less dissipates in a larger communion with his species. Add to this, that detached as he is from his own order, and generally brought into forcible and frequently disagreeable contact with the fierce habits and coarse passions of those below him, his natural fastidiousness is exaggerated by both circumstances into a morbid and false appreciation of his own dignity, and an erroneous view of the distance at which other classes are placed by fortune and education beneath him. Few of these peculiarities now remain; they have disappeared with the disappearance of the causes which produced them; but at the moment at which Lord Trimleston took a part in the proceedings of the body, an exemption from their influence, and not the influence itself, was the exception and the singularity. Lord Trimleston, with equals, was affable and kind; to the poor, humane; but to any class between these two extremes, no man could bear himself with a haughtiness more absolute and un-

bending. In the whole course of those unfortunate transactions, the false principle with which he set out was harshly and insolently conspicuous. He recognised no right in any other body than the aristocracy to interfere in concerns, which he believed absurdly, though conscientiously, to be the business of the aristocracy alone. The People, as well in his eyes as in those of an Irish chancellor, were assumed not to exist; the commercial classes he considered and treated as audacious intruders on the rights of their superiors. His obstinacy, his superciliousness, at an early period, alienated from him the respect and attachment, first of the merchants, and gradually of the aristocracy itself. But for many years the latter body followed closely in his train, and allowed themselves to be made either the duped or willing instruments of his public and private tyranny.

To the perseverance and exertions of the founders of the committee the Catholics were scarcely less indebted for its existence and continuance, and its spirited labours for the advancement of the cause, than to the undaunted zeal, the large views, and the lofty spirit of another Catholic nobleman.* Lord Viscount Taafe, more generally

* Contrast the character of these two men in their own correspondence, but particularly in the very ample letters of

known as the celebrated Count Taaf of the Holy Roman Empire, the German statesman and general, the Irish sufferer and patriot, a name familiar and dear to every Irish Catholic, was in such times, and in such a body, a species of moral miracle. His character has in it something singularly novel and romantic. His exclusion from the honours and distinctions of his own country; his early adoption of Germany as a soil far more congenial to the display of the high virtues and noble faculties he felt within him; his unchanging attachment to an unfortunate country; his perfect simplicity of purpose; his calm and mild wisdom; his numerous sacrifices; his untiring zeal for the depressed caste with which his name and birth, much more than his connexions and property,* had associated him, would add a lustre to the most splendid annals of any country, and shone almost singly and sadly in his own. "At a very advanced period of life," says an historian, † whose means

Mr. O'Connor to Dr. Curry, *May*, 1761; *August*, 1762; *October*, 1762; *July*, 1763; &c.

* His descendants continue to reside in Germany, and hold a high rank amongst the noblesse of Bohemia. The name is scarcely to be found in the later transactions of the Catholics.

† O'Connor's *Hist. of the Irish Catholics*, vol. i. p. 272.

of information were commensurate with his anxiety to vindicate the calumniated honour of his country, " he was in the habit of undertaking annual journies in the depths of winter, from his residence in Silesia to London and Dublin, to procure an alleviation of their sufferings. No views of leadership mingled with his zeal; his exertions were known but to few, not blazoned forth in newspapers. His rank in the imperial court gave him access to the first circles in Great Britain; bred in camps, and educated in Germany, he impressed on senators and courtiers the impolicy and injustice of the penal code, with the bluntness of a soldier and the honesty of a German: his efforts had no small weight in softening the rigour of persecution. His unassuming manners, his elevated station, his great age and venerable appearance, but above all, his ardent zeal in the cause of his oppressed countrymen, procured him a preponderating influence in the councils of the Catholics; that influence was exerted in the great purposes, during a long life, of promoting union, extinguishing dissension, and rousing to exertion. He strained every nerve to procure the concurrence of the nobility and gentry, but met with insuperable obstacles in the pride of an aristocracy of slaves, and in the malignity of party spirit, which shed

its venom on the purest motives, and disseminated the basest falsehoods." Such was the man whose temper and principles, as well as circumstances, were fortunately opposed to the overbearing dictatorship of Lord Trimleston, and who by his earnest and constant identification with the Committee and their measures, contributed mainly for a time to rescue both it and the body at large, from the slavish and chilling supremacy of the aristocracy.

The first ground of difference, the point through which the gradually-accumulating antipathy was allowed to escape, was the Remonstrance; but it soon launched out into accusations and recriminations of a much more personal character. Lord Taaffe supported the Remonstrance; Lord Trimleston opposed it. They were soon followed by their respective adherents. The motives alleged for this opposition, as they have come down to us, appear very unsatisfactory and indistinct; but the reader who follows the current of the history will soon perceive that they were the disguises only which the ancient animosities had for the moment assumed. A more positive source of dissension soon discovered itself. Lord Trimleston had been at the outset entrusted with the public money, subject of course to the interference of

the subscribers; but the Dictator, as he was justly termed, assumed the undivided control, and would suffer no intrenchment on this usurpation, or acknowledge the slightest authority, either on the part of the Committee, or the subscribers themselves, to interfere. This produced a very warm correspondence, in which Lord Taaffe's temper, sound sense, and Irish feeling, are most advantageously and touchingly contrasted to the arrogant conduct of his rival. The public indignation was universally excited;* but the Remonstrance, notwithstand-

* Mr. O'Connor, who may be considered as speaking the feelings of the Committee, though not actually a member, enters largely and warmly into the merits of this case. "You have laboured surely in vain," says he, (*Letter, May, 1761, to Dr. Curry*,)—"when, in your representative capacity as a committee, you bear the dictatorial taunts of a single person, who has usurped the property of the public, and who refuses to be accountable for it, except in his own way, not in theirs!" And a little lower—"I would with great deference also urge that, in regard to the uses it should be applied to, there is nothing so difficult as may not come within the extent of our own common penetration, without the dictatorship of any one person who might presume to exert a power over it. He lodged the money in an honest man's hands; but surely he did so under the control of the proprietors, and whether express or tacit, is all alike; the Committee, as representatives of those proprietors, have a right to ease him of the burden, &c. If this dictator

ing every exertion on the part of Lord Taaffe, notwithstanding his own personal contributions to the labours of the Committee, and still more his earnest and frequent communications with Primate Stone, was for the moment quashed, and the Catholics once more flung back, by the very hands which should have most assisted them, to their original state of apathy and despair.*

The administration of Lord Halifax, commencing under the kindest auspices, in a mild and encouraging speech from the throne, contributed for a moment to raise the hopes of the Catholics. But a momentary interval of hope was not sufficient to work a miracle. The old leaven remained ; the feud continued : a distracted and timid body, contending by intervals only, and in small numbers, against a compact and energetic oligarchy, long in possession of power, animated by the same spirit, and gifted with a skill and judgment in the wielding and direction of their resources, unexampled in the

should refuse to comply, another course should be taken with him, which I hope may prove effectual in punishing him, without letting our enemies into the secret."

* This is not the only instance in Irish Catholic history of similar discussions arising from a similar cause. (See *Walsh's History of the Remonstrance of 1661*, First Treatise, Part 1.)

history of public administrations;—such a body had little chance of other than the most partial and transitory success, soon to be compensated by some new conquest, or larger assumption on the part of their antagonists. They were yet fated to endure numerous disappointments, and to fall into numerous and important mistakes, before they could hope to find themselves in the straight and sure path, which conducts to the enjoyment of perfect freedom. The discussions consequent on Lord Trimleston's arrogant retention of the public money were partially got rid of, by Mr. A. M'Dermot's surrendering what he held under his Lordship, and a certain delusive tranquillity was for a moment restored to the deliberations of the body itself;* but the repeated and iniquitous rejection of the Elegit bill, to which even personal selfishness would not consent to sacrifice

* Mr. O'Connor fully saw the dangerous results of these contentions, and thought no price too great to purchase future exemption from the violent interference of this nobleman. “ Plain it is that Lord T. is meditating some mighty matter for his constituents. I expect no good from him; but if he does any, I do not grudge him the sums left in Mr. M'D.'s hands. He is a disease to our people, and I am confident they will never again subject any part of their property to his most arbitrary management.”—*Letter to Dr. Curry, Aug. 6th, 1762.*

a portion of the ascendancy prejudices of the day; the failure of the Foreign Enlistment bill permitting regiments to be raised by Lord Kenmare, Lord Kingsland, Sir Patrick Bellew, and others; together with the late disturbances in the North and South, the one the offspring of political principles, the other of pure physical suffering and rage, but both, as usual, ascribed to French gold and Popish disaffection,—had the most subduing effect on the temper and hopes of the Roman Catholics. The Association gradually relaxed in its exertions; its numbers fell off. Lord Trimleston indeed and his party were formally reconciled to Lord Taaffe and the other popular leaders; but the reconciliation was insincere; and the causes put forward by Mr. Wyse, in the preamble of their constitution,* if so I may call it, continued to affect them during the entire of its existence,

* This preamble set forth in energetic terms, that “the enactment of many of the penal laws was owing to the supineness of some, and the overbearing superiority of others in taking the lead, and despising the opinion of men of greater knowledge and penetration; to embezzlements of the public money, and insecurity of application of the purposes of its collections; to an imprudent choice of agents; to the difficulty of raising money to give weight to their solicitations; to the want of good understanding, harmony, and union.” These causes had produced the anti-Catholic

and were the proximate causes of its final dissolution, after several ineffectual struggles (particularly from Dr. Curry), in the year 1763.

The results, however, of their exertions were still conspicuous ; the impulse given still continued, even long after the creating causes had ceased. They left behind them a regenerating spirit, productive of the most momentous consequences. The Catholic people for the first time began to feel sensible of their degradation : they began to reason, to compare ; they saw that it was not by an ignoble and passive acquiescence in such degradation, that they could work out the hopes of their redemption ; they saw that the silent slave was trampled on, and that the oppressor never yet relaxed in his oppression of his own freewill. A momentary interval of repose did not quench the young and earnest spirit which was gradually waxing stronger within them. New hopes arose out of new discussions, and new struggles arose out of new hopes. The debates on the late questions had produced very remarkable changes on all sides ; the discussions on Lord Kenmare's bill,

code ; thwarted the measures which were attempted to remove it ; and continued for many years after the establishment and dissolution of the first Committee, the fertile source of every disorder.

—on the petitions for the continuance, &c. of Quarterage,*—but particularly on the Elegit

* “*Quarterage*,” or “*Intrusion*,” as it was sometimes called, was one of those iniquitous municipal exactions, which the impartial constitution of the day permitted to the Protestant corporations of this happy kingdom. It was a contribution required (something similar to what is paid by the Jews in Germany and Sicily) from all Catholic traders and shopkeepers, “for the due providing of all regalia ensigns and colours for the different fraternities, to supporting reduced freemen, to burying the dead, to waiting on the mayor on days of solemnity, and providing anniversary entertainments.”—*Commons’ Journal*. This badge of servitude, a relic of the last revolution, was enforced by seizure of goods, arbitrary imprisonment, assaults, &c. &c. The Catholics on the accession of George III. had in some places the courage to attack before the proper tribunals the legality of these demands; and, what is far more remarkable, in many instances had been successful. Petitions against these decisions poured in from the corporations of Cork, Limerick, Dublin, Waterford, &c.; and a bill brought in (proh pudor!) by Lucas confirmatory of the privilege, seemed for a moment to “revive the drooping and sinking spirits of the Protestants!!” (then persecuted as much as they have lately been in the North,) and to assure permanently the natural servitude and Helotism of the Catholics. This bill, however, much to the disappointment of these loyal and disinterested men, was quashed by the good sense and honest feeling, or, as it was then termed, the Popish partiality of Lord Townshend.

But the question of Quarterage is not less interesting in another point of view. It furnishes one of the most decisive

bill, though still virulent with the old anti-Catholic spirit, evince a much more moderate

though not earliest instances "of that levying of money for unconstitutional purposes," which was so long the staple theme of invective against the late Catholic Association. The first levy of the kind, as well as I can recollect, occurred about the period of the Spanish Armada (*Hallam's Constitutional History*, vol. ii.), when the Catholics of England, rich and poor, contributed their "Rent" of so much per man for the defence of their oppressing country. In Ireland, we find the one-penny subscription, at various periods; the Petitions indeed were generally got up by the only two classes, the aristocratic and the mercantile, who took any interest about them; but local questions like those just mentioned were defrayed by "a levy" of a small sum upon each citizen. The purposes to which it was usually applied were precisely similar. The Catholics of that day paid it into the Committee, and with this fund instituted suits, employed lawyers, defended actions, argued against bills before parliament, in the privy council, &c. The same clamour was then raised, as that which has so long edified the present generation. Like the Brunswickers, too, of our own age, the ascendancy men of that day adopted themselves what they condemned in others. The same House of Commons (*Boulter's Letters*, v. ii. p. 150, 151. 170. 192.) which had attacked with so much violence the collections which Catholics had raised in order to oppose the additions attempted to be made to the penal code, openly recommended similar collections (a recommendation faithfully adopted afterwards by the peasantry) amongst their own body against the tithe agistment. In a similar manner, the Catholics of the present day may quote precedent from

tone, and a much larger admission of Catholic grievances and Catholic claims to redress, than either parliament or people had yet been accustomed to. The administration of Lord Townshend considerably advanced what Lord Halifax had so propitiously begun; and though the unceasing domestic dissensions of the Catholics

the records of Orangeism for their late appeal to the forty-shilling freeholders. The very names of Lord Enniskillen, Colonel Archdall, &c., now most forward in array against them, are found affixed to the first resolutions which attempted to dis sever "the cherished relations" between landlord and tenant. The plea then put forward against this "levy" was the Pope and the Pretender. In 1793, the charge was changed to Defenderism and insurrection. Wolfe Tone, at the desire of the General Committee, then vindicated against these aspersions the "Rent" and contributions of that day.—(See *the Paper on the subject attached to his Memoirs*.) But in proportion as it became more extensive, more considerable, as it grew with the growth and strengthened with the strength of the body,—it naturally became an object of juster and more general alarm to the Anti-Catholics. The revival and perfecting of the system, achieved by the persevering labours of Mr. O'Connell, was one of the chief secrets of Catholic power, and of Orange hostility. The "Levy" was extended to America, to France, to Italy, &c. without a parliament to order it, an army to exact it, a tax-gatherer to receive it, until it finally attained the object for which it was designed; and, "unconstitutional" as it was, at last ended by opening the closed gates of the Constitution.

precipitating them into false measures, and mutual recrimination, and finally terminating in the dissolution of their committee, rendered them objects of pity or contempt, much more frequently than of apprehension, to their enemies;—yet these very enemies, from party and other motives, arising out of their own factious rivalries, were frequently obliged to call in these same Catholics to their alliance, and to make concessions to good sense and better feeling, which under other circumstances they would have scornfully disdained. Whatever were the quarrels of the ascendancy, there always resulted some advantage to the Catholics and their cause. Whether the government or the oligarchy were defeated, the Catholic could not lose. The notorious quarrel between the primate Stone and Boyle in 1753, which terminated so much to the advantage of Undertakers, and compelled the Managers to a reluctant surrender of patronage and public money, through an apprehension of an immediate refusal of the supplies; the succeeding contentions on the Eleggitt bill, in the final decision of which so many of the House of Commons were personally interested; but above all, the stratagems, and disputes, and changes connected with the Octennial bill of 1768, by rousing to habits of discus-

sion the public mind, and dividing the Protestant interest against itself, most materially contributed, in the midst of many temporary obstacles, to advance generally the cause of the Catholics.

The Association, as has been just stated, rather gradually melted away than abruptly separated by any formal or direct act, in the year 1763. Even the mercantile body, from which it had originally sprung, and from which the greatest portion of its life and energy was derived during its short and sickly existence, had sunk under the calamitous results of internal distractions, and seceded one by one from its later meetings. In the succeeding years of 1764, 1765, and 1766, the Catholics were too much alarmed by the outrages amongst the lower classes to think of assuming any corporate form which might excite or justify a suspicion of the slightest connexion with these disturbances. It is a remarkable feature in the early history of this body, that it seems throughout to have had no communication or sympathy with the people. Neither in a collective or individual capacity do the Catholic gentry and clergy appear to have had much control, or at least much of a political control, over the lower classes of their communion. Mr. O'Connor frequently complains,

in terms of just bitterness, of the more than Protestant severity of the Catholic landholders ; and the thunders of the episcopacy, and the exhortations of the lower clergy, in the insurrection of Munster, fell idly on the affections and fears of the infuriated peasantry.* A similar line of demarcation runs on through all their proceedings down to the year 1793. In that year we still find the committee in collision rather than in connexion with the Defenders, and vainly attempting to interpose an influence which was never felt, and an authority which was openly derided between the loosened passions of the multitude and open insurrection. A similar separation of Catholic views and interests, in despite of all the intermediate means of communication, arising out of the contentions and discussions connected with the Rebellion or the Union, is extremely perceptible in their first appeals to the Imperial Parliament. It was reserved for the late Association fully to amalgamate the entire mass ; to compress with a broad hand the sufferers of every denomination into one body, and to give for an indissoluble bond of union the perfect sense of common injury, the most extensive sympathy with

* See *Mr. O'Connor's Letter*, June 4, 1762 ; and the *Pastoral Letter* to the Diocese of Cloyne, March 2, 1762.

every thing Catholic, a defined and positive expression of their wants and wishes, and a universal, uniform, unbending determination, whatever time it might require, whatever difficulties might intervene, to obtain them. This was the mighty miracle, the great achievement of that powerful body—an effect never before produced to the same extent by any other combination of similar elements. But this also had its progress; and the people were tediously and laboriously prepared for the revolution. It rose up like a river from the earth; but an attentive investigation will still discover with astonishment from what deep and distant fountains that mighty stream had taken its birth, and with how many tributary rivulets in its long subterraneous passage it required to be fed, before it could attain, in the open day, that plenitude of power which has at length excited the alarm of the empire, and rendered necessary the immediate intervention of the entire legislature.

A considerable period now elapsed without any remarkable effort on the part of the Catholics; but in the year 1773 they again attempted a new organization. Of the relics of the *First* committee was gradually formed a *Second*, under the immediate auspices of Lord Kenmare, who seems to have succeeded in great degree to the

joint power of Lord Taaffe and of Lord Trimleston. Their first measures were not characterised by much judgment, or much indiscretion. But a fortunate concurrence of circumstances soon arose, and by the operation of those personal feelings which had obtained so considerable a support for the Elegit bill, much more than by any extraordinary exertion on the part of the Committee itself, were at last granted those important concessions of 1776, which for the first time relaxed the severity of the anti-Catholic code, and laid the sure ground-work of future equalization. The necessities of the Protestant pleaded for the freedom of the Catholic, and for once a sounder policy than the miserable principles of his statute-book, led him blindly but surely to a just sense of his own interests, and a more generous feeling for the sufferings of his fellow-countrymen.

CHAP. IV.

Review of the progress of the Catholics—Causes thereof—Salutary effects of the bill of 1776—Gratitude of the Catholics—Renewed courage and exertions—Continuance of the Committee under Lord Kenmare—Character and politics of that nobleman—New divisions—New secession of the aristocracy—Inefficiency of the Committee—Its total dissolution—New plan suggested by Wolfe Tone—compared with that of Mr. Wyse—Establishment of the Second General Committee, or Association of 1790—Exertions of that body—Important concessions to the Catholics—Bill of 1793—Review of the causes which led to that event—Domestic—Foreign: amongst the Protestants—amongst the Catholics—How far influenced by the General Committee, and by its leaders—Mr. Keogh—Dissolution of the Committee.

It is at this period that we can for the first time look back, and consider with something like a clear and dispassionate feeling, the causes of the progress which the Catholic had made, and the natural influence of that progress on his future destinies. At every epoch of these annals, we feel more fully the justice of the observations with which this sketch has set out. It is utterly impossible in a free state, for one portion of its

citizens to keep in permanent subjection the other. Living in sight of free institutions, every man must naturally desire to be free. In such societies, there is always a tendency to proper and just equalization, which no restrictive or oppressive statute can long continue to prevent, without injury to every portion of the community. Palliatives and expedients will not do. The moral law cannot be violated with greater facility than the physical. Press the air into one place, it will gain elasticity and try to escape in another; throw a stone into a smooth stream, it will foam up into a torrent about you; bridge or bar it across, even in the moment you are turning round it will overflow upon you. The code which stripped the Catholic of almost every civil right, could not altogether pluck from him the heart of a true citizen. It left some redeeming recollections, some stings of honest indignation, some stubborn visitings of ancient feeling, which in their good time were destined to rescue him from the "*fœdum crimen servitutis*," from the deep debasement (sin and misfortune at the same time) of general and unresisted slavery. The progress of this great change even in its commencement is singularly striking. With all the littleness clinging about them, the first efforts of the Catholics gave

strong pledges of ulterior success. It is surely an impressive moral spectacle to see mind directing thus a peaceful insurrection (if so it may be called) to peaceful purposes; to trace the progress of intellect discovering, by degrees, the rights and energies of a country, and to meet at last a nation of high-spirited and united men determining openly, at any cost, to attain them.

If the Catholic, in every law which regulates the advances of civil society, had a sort of assurance, that he must sooner or later burst from the unnatural condition in which a series of anti-social as well as anti-national enactments had confined him, the ascendancy on the other side evinced not less abundant proof of the perishable nature of its power; and discovered, even at the moment of its utmost prosperity, how truly it contained within itself the seeds of its future dissolution. Enjoyment produced negligence; negligence false security; false security erroneous views; erroneous views unjust measures; and such measures, by a wise law of our nature, ultimate and inevitable downfall. The Whig or Cromwellian ascendancy in Ireland had no sooner succeeded in effecting a revolution, far more violent and universal than the mere transfer of property usually consequent upon foreign

invasion, than they began to experience in their own persons and properties the painful results of their own insane policy. The land was cleared of its cultivators ; the Papist was ejected by public hostility and private fear in every direction ; the equal was reduced to the state of servant, and the servant soon debased to the state of slave. But when every passion was gratified, and every evil wish was made deed, they found themselves as far from the imaginary national or even personal advantages which their selfishness had pictured to them, as at the very outset of their legislative career. The taskmaster had been injuring his own property : in impoverishing the Papist, the Protestant had been impoverished also. It was soon found necessary to allow the “ hewer of wood ” and “ the drawer of water ” sufficient force for the task : * there was no advantage to be derived from a sick or a dying servant ; their avarice calculated, and the *matériel* of their subsistence, of their luxuries, of their power, being *Catholic men*, Catholic men were allowed just as much of liberty as was found essential for Protestant purposes. The chain was loosened that the slave might work.

* Ignovit abavus tuus victis ; nam si non ignovisset, quibus imperâsset ?—*Seneca de Clementiâ*.

The Protestants, when matters became tranquil in the country, began to think of improving their new mastership. The old system of selling their lots, customary under the Cromwellian dispensation, had produced a new race of resident proprietors. To cultivate their Protestant lands, they were obliged, in despite of statute and detestation, to recur at last to Catholic cultivators: the Catholic cultivators had no motive for zeal or industry; they were thorough "*glebæ astricti*" serfs, with no rights, no hopes, sunk in the worst moral and physical villainage. The race dwindled, decreased; the proprietor had gone too far. Palatines and Jews were then seduced to fill up the vacuum. They came, and melted away into the surrounding population; in a few years they became Papists, and Papists still remained the occupiers of the country.* The remedy, whe-

* Numerous instances of this absorption of the minority by the majority of the community, occur in the South. The mountain of Slieve Grine, county of Waterford, was formerly "planted" by an English Protestant colony; the names, still English, indicate their origin. Their descendants are Papists, and speak nothing but Irish. The Marquess of Waterford introduced a similar colony on his estate in the same county from the North. Protestantism for a time flourished—then dwindled—then died. The 240 fa-

ther theological or statistical, failed. It was one of those New Reformations which passed over the country, leaving it more grievously and obstinately Papist than before. Then followed the usual inconveniences of landed property—heavy loans, high interest, fraudulent mortgages, oppressive incumbrances. It was necessary at last for the proprietor to sell;—but in order to sell, it was necessary also there should be purchasers. None could be found. The English kept close within their happier homes, and left the Undertakers and their retainers to themselves. A few adventurous capitalists, indeed, swimming on the surface of society, dropped in occasionally from England amongst them, but these visits

milies, who still inhabit it, are stout Papists, and were the foremost in the late election against his Lordship. The place is still called “Graigue Shoneen,” or “The Rock of the Protestant.” In the county of Limerick, they have borne better fruit; many descendants of the Palatines still adhere to the religion of their forefathers. A great portion of Lord Southwell’s tenants are Protestant. Misrepresentations on this head are visible at all periods of Irish history. Contrast Mr. Le Hunt’s statements in the debate on the bill for enabling Catholics to take securities on land in 1764, and Primate Boulter’s pathetic remonstrances on the diminution of Protestantism, with Mr. Seymour’s lamentations on the modern emigrations and the 400,000 armed men of Master Ellis.

were rare and inoperative. The upper classes, who were Protestants, spent, but did not make money: the middle and the lower classes, who were Catholics, made money—created capital—but were prevented from bringing it freely into the market. Thus competition diminished, prices lowered, and Protestantism flourished at the grievous loss of Protestant comforts and Protestant prosperity. Then again the ascendancy found for their *own* interest that they must relax—avarice triumphed over fanaticism. Catholics were allowed to purchase land, that is, to increase the value of Protestant property, by bidding for it; and at the risk of making all Ireland Catholic (we still hear the same denunciations), the Protestant consented to receive ten or twelve times more from the Catholic capitalist than he could ever have expected from his Protestant fellow landlord. Money is of no sect; and this truth it was which laid the first seeds of Catholic emancipation. But a reader acquainted only with English society will ask, How came the serfs to be so rich, or the Catholic suddenly to start up into a capitalist? Here also was a quiet revolution, which had altogether escaped the observation of the Protestant. It must always be remembered, that it was war and not commerce which first planted the Pro-

testant ascendancy in Ireland. A conqueror disdains toil; trade is unworthy of his caste; but it is still necessary that the conqueror should be supported. In the same manner that the Turk suffered the Greek to toil for him, so the Catholic was suffered to become the merchant of the country, and to produce for the Protestant: the English Protestant continued to be the spender and consumer of the produce of the Irish Catholic. It is not difficult to conjecture which of the two, after the lapse of a century, would have accumulated profits—which would have been the lenders—which would have been the middle-men—which would, in fine, have been the purchasers, and which the sellers of landed property. The Catholic became, by the very force of things, proprietor; and Protestant ascendancy raged when it was too late against the work of its own hands. These internal inducements to relaxation were further strengthened by the embarrassed situation of our foreign relations. I find, July 4th, the Congress of America publicly proclaiming their independence; and in the October of the same year, 1776, the first act for Catholic relief passing, without much opposition, both Houses of the Irish Parliament.

The bill of 1776 thus gave the first legitimate sanction, the first opening to the natural exer-

tion of that element of power, which had been struggling for an outlet for so many years previous. The Catholic was permitted by statute to acquire an interest in the soil, to take leases for 999 years, to purchase under certain restrictions, &c. &c. The relaxation was great in its immediate effects, but far greater in the important consequences to which it inevitably conducted. This virtual recognition of citizenship, by admitting to a participation in the land, gave new desires; new desires produced new efforts—those efforts could never in the nature of things subside, until they naturally terminated in perfect equalization. The tendency to find the true level constantly augmented. The bill of 1776 gave the bill of 1793: the bill of 1793 gives at this moment the bill of 1829. It was this first step which really *emancipated*.

The gratitude of the Catholics was for a time extreme. But they soon recollected, that the striking off of a link or two was not the striking off of the entire chain. They began to renew their exertions for a restoration to those rights, which they now considered themselves more fully entitled to, from the rising wealth and intelligence and numbers of their body consequent on the late concessions. The second committee had a more general, but also a much more aris-

tocratic character than the first. The amalgamation of the nobility and gentry with the merchants, gave additional weight and lustre in the Protestant eye to their deliberations. Lord Kenmare was the ostensible leader of this body. He had few of those qualities which are necessary to sway or to enlighten a multitude. Affecting to control and to direct popular movements, no man seemed less acquainted with the moral machinery by which popular purposes are usually effected. He was cold, unconciliating, timid, yet fond of petty power, influenced by puny ambition, hanging between the Catholic and the Protestant, and sacrificing alternately, and generally unpropitiously, to the evil genii around the Castle on one side, and to the chained spirit of his country on the other. Lord Kenmare, unlike Lord Taaffe, saw nothing on a broad national scale : he sincerely desired relief from grievance ; but he looked for such relief to paltry artifice, secret diplomacy, bureau influence, and all that miserable train of official expedients, by which no people were ever yet delivered from their bondage, nor any revolution truly national or permanent effected in a great or an enlightened community. Lord Kenmare was a mere second-rate negotiator ; and, in such a warfare, a Catholic nobleman had little chance

of successful competition with the Protean tactics of an ascendancy cabinet. Duped by the minister, to the Catholic body mysterious and deceitful, betrayed himself, and betraying others, he dragged on his feeble ascendancy, as degrading to the body which admitted it, as to the individual who imposed the yoke, until the insidious motion of 1783, brought forward under the immediate influence of the Castle, but rejected by a large majority of the Committee, produced a renewal of those dissensions which had so long distracted all Catholic councils. This insult, as he construed it to be, was never pardoned. The enmity of his party, after evincing itself in a long-continued series of degrading altercations, unsubdued by concession, inexorable to every advance, foiled in every project, ended at last in their total discomfiture. The Kenmarites, a designation under which was classed a large portion of the gentry, and I believe all the nobility, seceded indignantly from all co-operation with a body, which they could not disguise from themselves they had long ceased to sway. The evils of the system hitherto adopted now became glaringly conspicuous. They had long been felt of the most fatal consequence. They had principally arisen from a vicious and injudicious admixture of the individual and represen-

tative character in the construction of the same body. The representative system of Mr. Wyse, by the junction of the lords and their adherents, had been given up, in an unwise spirit of sacrifice to existing prejudices, and in its place had been substituted a heterogeneous compilation. Several members stood there, in their irresponsible individual capacity, and others again attended as deputies from their fellow citizens.

To remedy these abuses, after a variety of modifications, the celebrated Plan of 1793 was finally adopted. It was preceded by a reconciliation between the Kenmarites or seceders, and the sub-committee, or acting portion of the general committee of 1773. The document which provided for the immediate execution of this project, signed by Edward Byrne, the then secretary, is to be found under the name of "Instructions" in *W. Tone's Memoirs*. The reader will perceive the alterations which the circumstances of the times suggested and required, by comparing them with the original plan of Mr. Wyse.*

* *Association or Committee of Representatives, according to Mr. Wyse's plan in 1760.* *General Committee of Delegates according to W. Tone's plan in 1793.*

1. A member for each

1. Two or three residents

It is obvious from such comparison, that a very close analogy exists between the two

parish in the city of Dublin, to be chosen at a parochial meeting of the principal inhabitants.

A proportionate number for each county.

2. Ditto for each principal town or borough.

4. Each nomination to be signed by the clergy, and the principal inhabitants of the place or county.

5. Each election to be carried on as secretly as possible.

6. Such persons only as shall be elected shall constitute the committee; other gentlemen may *assist*, but shall not enjoy a *right to vote*.

of each parish shall be appointed, as primary electors to meet at some central spot in each county, to choose from four to one persons to act as representatives for said county.

2. A proportionate number for each town shall be elected for the same purpose.

3. These electors shall appoint *associate* delegates from the resident inhabitants of Dublin, who shall correspond with the representatives of the counties when absent.

4. No particular signature is required.

5. The election to be carried on in a private house, it being imprudent to convene a general meeting of Catholics for such purposes.

6. In order to insure attendance, besides the precautions just noticed, no one shall be eligible, who shall not solemnly pledge himself to at-

plans. The first object of both, under a singular parity of circumstances, was to deliver the body from the dead-weight of aristocratic apathy and pretension ; and the second to obtain as fair an expression of the public will as could well be hoped for under the numerous public and private difficulties with which they had to contend. This was originally considered desirable by Mr. Wyse. In consequence of the additional experience how impracticable it was to work the interests of the Catholics by the sub-committee, such an arrangement was now deemed indispensable. In the execution of Mr. Wyse's project, it was found that not only the Dublin members were more constant in their attendance, but that also scarcely any one of the country gentlemen was chosen, or if chosen, subsequently took the trouble to attend the deliberations of the body. In recurring to a similar plan of organization,

The secrecy which was required in both instances was particularly requisite : in the one, by the alarm of Mons. Thurot's invasion a month or two before ; in the other, by partial insurrections in various parts of the kingdom, under various names.	tend his duty in Dublin, when required to do so by order of the committee, or at least who shall not promise to attend in his turn. At the same time the county delegates shall not be required to be present except on very important occasions.
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both these evils were to be avoided—a true organ of public opinion was to be obtained on one side, and on the other a full and frequent attendance. The Dublin members were assiduous; but by the plan of Mr. Wyse they could only be considered as members for Dublin; in other words, as the expression of mere Dublin feeling. It was necessary to give them a more general character. They were associated with the members of the counties, and in some degree acted as their delegates or representatives. Thus in the ordinary course of proceeding, all difficulties were removed, and on extraordinary occasions, when some objection might be made to such expedient, there was no doubt but the county representatives would make a sort of periodical exertion to appear in their places, and thus give the character of a complete representation of the Catholic body to their assemblies. There was still existing much difficulty in meeting in large masses. Had such meetings actually taken place, it is not unlikely they would have been treated, in the times in which we speak, with much the same sort of severity as the meetings at Manchester in 1812, &c. The plan of 1760 recommended secrecy. The body was crushed and benumbed: none but the middle class acted. In 1791, the nation had

very generally awakened from its stupor: it was then important to prevent as much as possible confusion. Primary elections, after the manner of the electoral colleges of France, prevented errors, and avoided all publicity; and at the same time, from the very nature of the parochial assemblages, &c. (to which on other occasions the people were sufficiently habituated), they had the character of emanating directly from the people. But the most important difference between the plan of 1760 and the plan of 1793, was the permission given, directly or indirectly by the former, to landed gentlemen to assist at the deliberations, though not regularly chosen. The Committee thus partook of a double character, *individual* and *representative*, which led to a variety of defects and corruptions, such as must always result from the absence of control, responsibility, and the free and just action of public opinion. The “*Instructions*” of 1793 complain in formal terms both of the principle and results of this unquestionable evil. They propose to remove it by an important improvement. The Dublin delegates are reduced considerably in number for the same object: “a measure,” say the Instructions, “which was always desirable, but which could not heretofore be accomplished, as the attendance of

landed gentlemen was so uncertain and irregular." This reproach was then true, and has since been justified by repeated experience.

The judicious exertions of the Catholics, the increased frequency and extension of public discussion, the important political triumphs of 1782, which created a new heart within the breast of the nation, and the enlarged manner in which all great political questions were now for the first time treated by the country, conducted by degrees the administration and the parliament to the consideration at least, of Catholic grievance, and Catholic relief. But the enjoyment of monopoly was too immediate, and the legislators themselves too directly interested in its continuance to hope from their wisdom, or generosity, any material alleviation of Catholic suffering. The magnanimity of a body like the Irish parliament, which scarcely can be considered under any other light than that of a species of borough self-elected corporation, was frequently and fruitlessly appealed to. Justice by such men, and the arguments of justice, were regarded not merely as idle and absurd theories, but treated with the contumely and scorn with which the successful possessor rejects the claims of his duped or defrauded creditors. It can scarcely be doubted, that had not the

apprehension of foreign attack joined its terrors to the conviction of internal discord and disturbance, and the question been suddenly converted to one of mere personal danger and party expediency, the weapons of right reason and well-established fact would have fallen blunted and pointless from the shield of the ascendancy. The lessons taught by the errors and omissions of the revolution of 1782 had been seized but by few. The partizans of popular rights had never imagined in that momentous struggle, that they were contending only for a *party*; that their triumph was in name only a national victory; and that the trophies and fruits would be strictly confined to the immediate combatants, and their adherents within or without the walls of parliament. The colony was every thing, the nation nothing.* The only

* It is a remarkable circumstance, that when every other question of public reform, and the most enlarged views of national improvement, were liberally entertained by the patriots of 1782, Catholic emancipation, which ought to have been the base of all, was pertinaciously and punctiliously excluded. This was building the world on the elephant, and the elephant on the tortoise. When the question for the enfranchisement of the Catholics was put in the committee, only two or three were for it; so small indeed was the number, that all idea of proposing it to the Convention was surrendered. Yet this was the same

change wrought after a long series of parliamentary efforts, in which the talent and spirit and vigour of the antagonists very far exceeded the importance of the object contended for, was a change in the form of administering the same exclusive system, a little alteration in the *manège* of the ascendancy. The people, *pro tanto*, had as little to say to the good or evil of the change as to the interior squabbles of a Venetian senate. It enhanced, indeed, the difficulties of the management, and raised the prices of the Undertakers ; but the final consequences fell again upon the people ; and in proportion as corruption increased its demands, the nation was taxed more highly to answer the demands of corruption. The policy of England for a time allowed the successful faction to triumph over its competitor, and retreated rather than fled from the field. She knew too well that there was little to dread from the feuds or victories of a party. She perceived that a fatal mistake had been made ; that the country

Convention which contained a greater proportion of landed property within its bosom than the House of Commons itself, and presented that memorable petition for Reform, which, had it not been for the consummate prudence of Lord Charlemont, would in forty-eight hours have thrown all Ireland into a flame.

had never amalgamated with the opposition; that the cry of independence did not proceed from a nation. In her own good season she stepped in between both parties, and crushed both alike into their ancient servitude and servility. The Catholic had been studiously excluded from the advantage of the contest—he felt no interest in sharing the resistance or the danger. The patriots of 1782 gradually disappeared; they became apostates, and fell back into their ancient ranks amongst the ministry; or still resisted, few and proud, and were many of them afterwards duped or driven into flagrant rebellion. In no instance did they sufficiently appeal to moral force; they had no people, neither great numbers, extensive intelligence, or general organization, to fall back upon. In the year 1792, these consequences every day became more and more perceptible, and every moment brought closer the crisis, between freedom and tyranny, between licentious independence on one hand, and utter despotism on the other.

Some symptoms of that organization which subsequently led to the rebellion of 1798, had already begun to discover themselves. The North had begun to form those provincial, county, and parish committees, which were afterwards converted into companies, regiments,

and brigades. The Catholics indeed in general were excluded from these meetings ; the ancient leaven of Puritanism still lingered amongst the Dissenters, and thwarted as in 1782, every effort made to bring about a nearer approximation of the rival sects. But a very intimate connexion existed between many members of the General Committee and the leading directors of the Union. Both were again in communication with the French government, and not altogether unaffected by the spreading influence and principles of the Revolution. These circumstances combined, contributed to excite a strong feeling of suspicion and alarm in the Irish government. It was farther augmented by the sudden appearance of the Defenders, a new form of that spirit of turbulence and discontent which had so long affected the country. The Defenders had no sort of connexion with the Committee, or its leaders ; but they professed the same religion, and laboured under the same grievances as the Committee : this was sufficient in the mind of the administration to associate them with all its proceedings. The Committee thus acquired a sudden importance from the position which it held between all these parties, and the possibility that ere long it might be converted into a safe and successful mediator between ancient rivals, and

thereby become the direct means of combining the scattered fragments of Irish strength, the *disjecta membra* of the old Irish party, against the usurpation and abuses of the English. The moment that one portion of the nation could not be efficiently governed through the fears and selfishness of the other, the common trafficker, in their common rights, would be obliged to recur to open force; and in this doubtful conflict between nation and nation, and not as hitherto between faction and faction, there were great difficulties and great risks to encounter. But these motives of themselves were not sufficient. The public was not yet sufficiently awake to these perils, the administration was not gifted with a vision sufficiently large and statesman-like; they preferred meeting the danger to providing against it, and thus added one precedent more to the many already given, that nothing was to be had from England but by menace or open force. The war with France soon put an end to all this hesitation. It was the signal of an inglorious surrender. The Relief bill had been flung contemptuously from the table of the House in 1792. The year succeeding, the same message which announced the declaration of hostilities, recommended also the largest concessions to the Roman Catholics.

The recommendation was adopted almost unanimously. The bill was brought in in January, and passed both Houses before the end of March.

But it would be unjustly defrauding the General Committee, and the Catholic body generally, of their unquestionable right to the glory of such a victory, to ascribe exclusively to a change in the foreign relations of Great Britain, and the influx of republican principles, this very remarkable sacrifice, made in an instant by the ascendancy, of the monopoly and power of two successive centuries. But the Catholics of 1793 were a very different race, politically speaking, from the Catholics of 1750, or even of 1776. In 1778, there were not more than eighty registered Catholic freeholders in all Ireland; and even much later, whole districts might be found where a single Catholic freeholder was not discoverable. But the progress of Catholic wealth and Catholic intelligence was nevertheless most remarkable. The limitation of all the energies of the Catholic mind to one single object, the acquisition of wealth, had produced in an inconceivably short time its natural result.* It

* Before 1641 the Catholics possessed two-thirds of the fee-simple property of the country, the Church and Protestants the remainder. The whole of these two-thirds was seized

had perfected the art of acquisition. The Catholic then was what the Jew still is. There

by Cromwell. By the act of settlement, the English-Irish church obtained 5,140,000 acres. Towards the close of the same century, Catholic property was much diminished. Lawrence says distinctly (*in his Interest of Ireland*, a treatise published in 1682), "that of 10,868,949 acres returned by the last survey of Ireland, the Irish Papists are possessed but of 2,041,108 acres." This makes about one-fifth of the whole; but other writers (*Hallam's Constitutional Hist.* vol. ii.) think the proportion was still less,—and express a doubt, whether even one-seventh of the fee remained in the possession of the Catholics. 1,060,792 acres had been lavishly granted to English settlers. Sir W. Petty, so late as 1672, still gives the Catholics one entire half. The change of property, and the progress of confiscation, must thus have been most rapid; and this very rapidity, which of course implies violence, inspired very natural fears of a similar resumption on the part of the actual proprietors. The whole anti-Catholic code was dictated by this apprehension, was sustained by it, was continued by it. The laws relative to intermarriage of Catholic and Protestant were intended to act as bars to the peaceable re-acquisition by the usual operation of the relations of society of these confiscated lands. Such laws were passed against the mere Irish, 28 Hen. VIII. The disarming, and disfranchising, and excluding acts, were intended to prevent a more open and *forcible* re-seizure. Many even of the preambles of those statutes bear the clearest testimony to the existence of this dread. Protestant wealth was gradually falling back, by family alliances to the old proprietors. When commerce was thrown into their

was no reason why he should not succeed in the same way, and as well. The very exclusion too from the ordinary indulgences of his situation forced him to accumulate. His Protestant master became a spendthrift, with the habits of a spendthrift; the Catholic became a miser, with the dispositions of a miser. But the relaxation of 1776 forced him from this state,* and opened

hands as much by the negligence of their Protestant masters as by their own industry, these instances became far more frequent and obvious. The very forcible statements of a late able pamphlet (and statements much stronger might be adduced) show how very rapidly the same principle has lately been advancing. But it has long ceased to be a matter of expediency, social or political, to present any obstacle to such transfers. The very code intended to effect it has produced a no less portion of evil to Protestant than to Catholic. "It is a code," says Lord Clare, in his speech of 1793, "injurious to the *landed* interest of Ireland, and inevitably diminishing the value of *every* man's estate who voted for it." The actual struggle is for barriers, now become unnecessary, for premiums and encouragements, long found ineffectual. But the recollection of former rule is always dear. Struensee found it more difficult to prevail on the clergy of Denmark to give up the shadow than the reality. Long after they had ceased to persecute, they continued to retain the badges of their ancient superiority.

* Ramet, sous Henri IV., signait *Seigneur Suzerain de trois millions d'écus*. (Il ne connaissait pas l'étendue de sa suzeraineté.)

to him new channels for his activity and intelligence; he felt within him another soul, the thirst for other distinctions. He had wealth, and he was anxious to convert it into gratification. He found himself suddenly empowered to purchase land. He became a landed proprietor: but with the land the privileges which the land gives were withheld. He was thus in an *unnatural* state still, and had advanced only from a greater to a lesser degradation. The same anxiety which provoked his exertions in former instances, redoubled them in the present. If he had been desirous to invest his capital in the soil, he now felt much more strongly the desire of acquiring all the advantages for which such investiture is usually coveted. Intelligence and education had advanced with a pace scarcely less rapid:* the relaxations on education had

* In the year 1731, from an *Abstract of a Report of a Committee of the House of Commons*, it appears that in the entire kingdom, besides huts, sheds, and movable altars, the number of mass-houses was 892,—the number of private chapels, 54,—the number of nunneries, 9,—the number of Popish schools only 549. Fourteen years ago, the schools of Ireland amounted to 4000. They now amount to 18,000. The proportion of Catholics educated in these schools, to other sects, is about 3 to 1. In Munster alone, there are 171,000 children educated.—*Second Report of Commis-*

been numerous; but the spirit of these relaxations had been outstript by the spirit of the people. The ascendancy were only acting in consistency and system, when they wished to extinguish the mind at the same time that they desired to employ the body of the slave. They knew well what education gives; they knew well that the tree of knowledge grows in the neighbourhood of the tree of life; and they were only following the common sense of a sagacious tyranny, when they exclaimed, as they repeatedly did in their penal statutes, "Let them not eat of it, lest they live"—lest they become as we are—lest they become gods. But the desire of this fruit was not to be snatched away from the human breast. It is as much in the course of human nature, as any other thirst or hunger. What the Catholic was not allowed to *take*, he *stole*; he was educated in defiance of penalty, in the face of privation; he was educated under every restriction of penal law. The seed became more precious for what it had cost; with the knowledge he had *acquired*, he felt fully how much that knowledge had been *pro-*

sioners, 1824. In Ireland generally there are 421,000 Roman Catholics educated; 25,000 only of which are educated by the public funds of the state.—*Report*, 1826.

hibited. He opened the history of the country, with the Catholic priest on one side, and his own Catholic family on the other, for his commentators and interpreters, stinging him onward at every line to some new and exciting conclusion. The ascendancy saw their error ; and instruction, home-made and home-directed, was permitted, and at first but barely permitted, by the law. Rather than have a French enemy to teach and an Irish rebel to learn, they deemed it wiser to teach themselves. The Catholics had thus acquired land, and acquired information ; they were forced on involuntarily by both elements, to the acquisition of the object for which both are valued, an equal share in the honours and emoluments of the state, eligibility, and enjoyment, of their share of political power. This was the principle of their struggle in 1793. If the victory was not fully achieved, the fault lay with themselves. Fatal circumstances, and the old feuds still raging “*sub cineri doloso*,” even in the improved state of their body, did more against them than any steady system of opposition which they met with in either house of parliament.

Up to the very moment of concession, the General Committee conducted the affairs of the body with great prudence and propriety. The

men who at that time held in their hands the reins of the little commonwealth, and formed in some degree the executive of their government, were for the most part selected from the same class and educated in the same principles, with those who had originated and guided the first deliberations of 1760. The discomfiture of the party of Lord Kenmare was injuriously and unwisely construed into an attack of the mercantile and lower classes upon the entire aristocracy, and for a time they marked their displeasure by abstaining in a mass from all communication with either. But the elections of 1792, which reconstructed on an improved basis the committee of 1760, sent in anew a large infusion from the counties of the landed influence of the body: several of the gentry were chosen, and attended with sufficient alacrity the first meetings. But the Catholic peerage and baronetage were still absent. They were still wounded by the encroachments of the middle classes; and attributing to sinister view, and ignorant impatience of their wrongs, the more ardent efforts of their countrymen, at last retired, with few and casual exceptions, from all participation in "the vulgar violence," and sate down at a distance, in stately indifference at every attempt which was made for their delivery. The General Committee

held their meetings with great regularity and order, and adopted into a series of measures well calculated to bring into general action the dormant energies of their community. Their public papers, owing perhaps to the judicious selection of their secretary, Wolfe Tone, exhibit at this period a capacity and vigour far beyond any former document connected with their question. There had been, indeed, in progress through the body itself, a powerful though silent revolution. The Catholic had not shut his eyes to the signs of the times, but had lifted himself up to gaze from the very outset with all his strength, and with all his soul, at the great instruction which every day's events now placed before him. A larger and more liberal philosophy, a more becoming spirit of liberty, elevated their new struggles for freedom. The debates were animated,—bold,—instructive. There is a marked evidence of the accumulation of intellectual wealth, in the variety and accuracy of the views, and of firm thought and independent habits in the numerous and conflicting parties, by which they were supported. The effects of the relaxations of 1776 were every where visible; the seed had not been cast upon a rock, nor amidst brambles, nor to the winds of heaven; every where it developed itself in powerful

promise ; the education was fully commenced ; the tree had risen. In a few years afterwards it was destined to bear the noblest and most abundant fruits.

The affairs of all bodies, especially where they are numerous, from indolence, neglect, or conscious inferiority, naturally fall into the hands of a few ; and whatever may be the theoretic pretensions of a democracy, time, if nothing else, will gradually compress it into an oligarchy. The very nature of public business is such, that it can never be efficiently done except in committee. The body at large exercises little more than the veto or sanction. So it was in the general committee of 1793 ; the sub-committee were the managers, the committee itself the approver. A remarkable man, well calculated to wield the energies or intellect of any country, suddenly arose, and assumed the management of both.

John Keogh rose out of the mercantile body, was created by its necessities, adopted its wishes, directed its will, and ruled it, and through it the entire Catholic community, with very nearly undivided sway, until the period of his death. He was roughly hewn, both mind and body,—endued by nature with the coarser rather than the nicer faculties of the states-

man,—his education solid rather than elegant, and more to be esteemed for the ready weapons which it furnished from its armoury for practical and every-day purposes, than for any stores of rich classic lore which it presented, or the exuberance of that Irish imagination which is so much the theme of self-complacent panegyric amongst all classes of his countrymen.

But the character and intellect of John Keogh was eminently, was especially framed for the times. It was the offspring of the existing opinions and the local circumstances of the body. No man could more felicitously seize, or more promptly bend both, when necessity required it, to his purpose. Attempered by a happy admixture of the bold and the judicious, of the daring and the deliberative, thoughtful but firm, moderate but not weak, he formed in himself the connecting link between two periods, the most opposite in view and spirit, of Catholic history. He gave a movement far more general than any which had yet been experienced to the Catholic mind: the materials which he had to work with were, it is true, but few; but his skill in their management, his knowledge of the means by which they could be applied to the best practical advantage, under every circumstance, was extensive and profound. By the secession of the

aristocracy, he was rescued from all chance of those unnatural collisions which had so much impeded the first faltering steps of the cause; he confined himself exclusively to the citizens: when the bandages and ligaments which tied up the arteries of the country were more perfectly removed, he had little doubt that the mercantile class would gradually transmit a portion at least of their wholesome blood to the lowest orders of the people; and that the aristocracy could not ultimately avoid following where the people and the merchants led. It is true, indeed, that this period was likely to be delayed. The aristocracy continued, down to the very instant of the concessions, to regard with distaste and disdain his plebeian pretensions; the clergy still continued to separate themselves with caution from all public concerns; and the people, far more under the dominion of their landlords and their pastors than under the influence of a distant and almost unknown body, lent no sort of co-operation or assistance to his measures. The leader, for a long period, was scarcely known to them even by name: the want of political knowledge, of the free circulation of public opinion through newspapers, &c., the want even of roads, of conveyances, of all points of contact with the peo-

ple, debarred them from all chance of a great national junction. The exertions of John Keogh were thus in appearance local; but the results were felt later in every portion of the body. He achieved the first great triumph of the Catholic cause by a series of measures, none of which were distinguished by any peculiar brilliancy or effect; but so well linked together, and so minutely adapted to their end, that it was impossible to refuse them, when you arrived at the result, the praise of the most perfect and consummate address. To the object he had in view, and the body with which he had to deal, his mind and manners, his frame of thought and colour of expression, his writing and his speaking, were singularly adapted. It was all quiet, business-like matter-of-fact; no display; little expenditure of art; every thing for an express and intelligible purpose.* In a few years he gave the cause that ascendancy in the mind of Europe, which augmented ever after with obstacle, and has gone on, drawing strength from difficulty, to its perfect and final consummation. The General Committee, sharing little

* Yet John Keogh was not without his vanity. The pages of Tone, and the recollection of his friends, will furnish numerous instances. But this is a trifling accusation: much more serious charges have been made against his honesty.

with the nobility, still less with the people, was yet regarded by the governors and legislature of France as the virtual representation of the nation; the administration itself entered into treaty and arrangement with its deputies; and, to its prayer, and the measures by which it was supported, were ultimately conceded the half-emancipation of the Roman Catholics.*

* The Catholics themselves stood between the country and total emancipation. The sixty-eight addressers who declared themselves *satisfied* with a part, where so much was still due, will never be forgotten. They were the men who gave the country the bitter chalice of all its after sufferings.

CHAP. V.

Omissions and defects of the bill of 1793—Causes thereof—Gratitude of the Catholics—Servility of the Aristocracy—General apathy—Rebellion of 1798—Effects of the relaxations—Improved condition of the Catholics—Increasing anxiety for their total emancipation—Meetings to petition for that purpose in 1805—Draft of petition rejected—Oligarchical meetings in Marlborough Street—Mr. Ryan—Indignation of the country—Aggregate meeting in Stephen's Green—Attempts to reorganise the General Committee—Similar attempts in 1807, 1808—Aggregate meeting in William Street in 1809—Establishment of the Third General Committee on a similar plan to that of 1790—Elements of which it was composed—The Aristocracy—The Clergy—The Bar—The people, still of little influence—Character of the leaders—Lord Fingal—Lord Gormanstown—Lord Ffrench—Lord Trimleston—Mr. Scully—Mr. Hussey—Mr. Clinch—Dr. Dromgoole—Dr. Troy, Catholic archbishop of Dublin—Surviving members—Proceedings of the Committee—Proclamation to disperse it under the Convention Act by Mr. Secretary Wellesley Pole—Arrest of the members—Trials—Dissolution of the Committee.

THE relaxations of 1793 were given in a narrow, bargain-like spirit. The grant was not on any embracing principle of national policy. It included little of prospective wisdom. It was a panic-struck capitulation,—a sacrifice of

ancient monopoly, given up reluctantly to the command of a superior, and in obedience to the advancing dangers of the times. Even in the moment of grace, party and personal views interfered with the grand interests of the country.* No reference was made to the actual or probable state of the population. The very concession of the Elective franchise, liberal and generous as it appeared, was the gift of an enemy. The aristocracy acceded, but with little intention of conferring a benefit, to the wishes and claims of the people. The parliament of Ireland since the treaty of Limerick had been little better than a junta. Like all juntas, it was influenced by the most profligate personal ambition. The large proprietors in the South, whose estates were covered with Catholic tenants, had often not more than one freeholder; they saw an accession to their territorial power and parliamentary influence in the accession of the new freeholders. The moment the franchise was granted, they thought themselves authorised to take possession of the conscience and vote, as they had already in their manifold tyranny taken possession of the food and clothing, of their half-educated tenantry. Similar

* See the Report of the Debate of 1793, p. 181, &c.

motives led to admission to the magistracy, to the admission to grand juries, &c.* As long as eligibility to the higher offices of the state was refused, such privileges conferred only a larger patronage on the oligarch; augmented the abuses of the aristocracy, left the people very much where they were, and above all, played the miserable policy of the Caudine Forks, liberated, but disgraced; loosened one hand, idly dreaming that it would never loosen the other; gave power, but continued discontent; and sent out of the prison-house a host of captives—branding them at the same time with the name of slave, and refusing them, though free, the communion and rights of free citizenship.

This emancipation of shreds and patches, this half-equalization bill, would soon however have produced its natural results; and, in a session or two, the *libertino patre nati* would have become perfect and natural freemen, had not the perils which the minister apprehended reached

* The Catholics were also rendered admissible to Corporations by the enacting clauses of the act; but this concession was altogether neutralised by the provisos which followed: nothing illustrates more clearly the spirit of reluctant surrender in which this bill was framed. The Corporations of course profited by this mistake. Catholics continued to be excluded.

abruptly their climax. The other parties in the state to which we have just referred, looking, not like the Catholic, to a retrenchment of partial abuse, or a redress of partial grievance, but proposing a sweeping away in mass of the good and the bad, advanced between them and their hopes, and plunged the country into a tumultuary warfare, a sudden physical effort at redemption. The organization of the North had now gone on for a considerable period with great secrecy and vigour. The Union had spread through almost every county in Ulster, and was proceeding rapidly towards the West and the South. In proportion as it advanced new views opened upon its leaders. They would have been contented at the outset with parliamentary reform, and other ameliorations of a still minor importance; but discussion—exasperation—the confidence of increasing union, and with it of increasing strength—the sense, that they had now been compromised, beyond all possibility of retreating, enlarged their demands, and they at last looked to the separation of the two islands, and the establishment of a republic, in alliance with or under the protection of France, as the only means by which the happiness of the country could be permanently or securely effected. The Executive of the United Irishmen, established at Dublin, somewhat on the model of the French

Directory, opened through its agents a communication with the heads of the republic. The results of this connexion were soon perceptible. Fleets were fitted out, and military preparations were made in every direction through France, to co-operate with the members of the union in their projected attempt to throw off the dominion of England. The promptitude and judgment with which these arrangements were effected, were however rendered nugatory at a most critical moment, by a series of fatal circumstances, over which human wisdom and human effort could have little control.* Leinster and Munster had been but partially organised—Connaught not at all. The union after repeated deliberations came to the determination to rest on their arms until the whole of Ireland could be brought into the same state of perfect combination; this in ordinary cases would have been sound policy—the most judicious course which bold but prudent men could have adopted. But it necessarily produced delay. The Irish government were thus allowed both time and means in the interval, to come at an accurate knowledge of the whole conspiracy. It met, instead of waiting for the

* Hoche's expedition.—Little less than a miracle saved Ireland. Steam was not yet in use.

danger. The South by a series of cruelties, justifiable on no ground political or moral, was goaded into a premature resistance. The county of Wexford was the first to revolt. This was called by the minister of the day, "making the rebellion to explode before its time;" that is, first creating the rebellion, and then punishing for what it had created. Every sort of horror; popular and irregular insurrection; open war; military law; civil carnage—followed. Few there were in the entire island who were not affected in some way or other by the calamitous visitation. It did not endure more than eight months, yet it cost the empire seventy thousand citizens, and two millions of the public money. But every good man and wise politician willingly throws a veil over the bloody record. This is no time to look back upon the melancholy annals of the past: there are consolations yet in store for the country: our eyes henceforth should be fixed upon the future.

The Union followed. It was an inevitable consequence of the Rebellion. The nation fatigued, was easily overpowered: in a state of exhaustion—of torpor, it submitted to any thing—it submitted to every thing;—the great point was, to be rescued as speedily as possible from itself. One party as usual was played against another. The Catholics were bribed with pro-

mises—the Protestants with realities. The Catholics *were to have* a total and immediate emancipation,* but the Protestants were left in *possession* of their old ascendancy. Thus between them both the Union was triumphantly carried. It had the direct sanction of parliament, and appeared to have the concurrence and approbation of the nation.

During all this period the Catholic cause remained very nearly stationary. Some trifling attempts had been made in 1796 and 1797 to obtain the portion of rights which still remained behind, but with as little success as had attended the first struggles of their forefathers for relaxation. The rebellion of the succeeding year, in its far larger and more terrible interest, absorbed all secondary considerations. The feelings and claims of the Catholics were lost in the clash of the national encounter. Neither was there evinced on the restoration of tranquillity a much livelier inclination to stir in their own affairs. Civil war was still too recent: every

* The evidence of Lord Rossmore, Colonel Curry, and the documents connected with the transaction itself, had, for a considerable time back, left little doubt of the accuracy of this assertion on the mind of the public. But the statement of the Duke of Wellington in the late debate places the question now beyond all cavil.—Henceforth it must be considered as a portion of authentic history.

attempt to take a part in public concerns was connected in the mind of the government with the principles of the late Rebellion. There were other circumstances, too, of a more particular and local nature, which considerably impeded and interfered. The restoration of so large a portion of the Catholic rights as those conceded by the bill of 1793, the secession of large numbers of their body consequent on the degrading and impolitic declaration of the celebrated "sixty-eight," so similar to those avowals reprehended at an earlier period by Mr. O'Connor; but above all, that natural sluggishness characteristic of the body, and the desire which every citizen felt to enjoy a repose,* which the suppression of the insurrection had only just allowed him, had a very subduing influence on

* This will always be the case where a great degree of previous tension is observable. England still seems to apprehend the prolonged action of the impetus which has lately been produced in Ireland; but she may banish all fear upon this account. It was generated with great difficulty, and after the application of a long series of stimulants. A nation, and particularly a susceptible nation, (and what nation is more susceptible than the Irish?) collapses far more easily and rapidly than it rises. Let it be remembered, that after the revolution of 1782, *one* or *two* only of the patriots who achieved it were returned to the succeeding parliament by the gratitude of their fellow-countrymen.

the temper of the Roman Catholics. The General Committee had been dissolved, and no further proceedings were entered on, till long after the period of the Union. When the wounds and terrors which the Rebellion had left behind, were nearly forgotten, and the pledges which the union held out were impudently denied, the Catholic once more began to look to his own exertions for a perfect equalization with other classes of his fellow-countrymen. The concessions of 1793, by the niggard and jealous spirit which had survived them, a spirit fully sanctioned by the illiberal policy of the remaining portion of the exclusive code, continued, as far at least as practical results were in question, for many years very nearly inoperative. The brand and the inferiority still endured: the relaxations had in nothing secured the Protestant, and had but partially benefited the Catholic. He felt that he *ought* to rise to his natural level, and he soon felt, with a little more perseverance, that he *could*.* These conclusions, after long floating in the form of paragraphs in the public prints, or sentences in letters, or excla-

* Mr. Grattan says well, "that the slave is not so likely to complain of the want of property, as the proprietor of the want of privilege."—This was the difference between the Catholics of 1776 and the Catholics of 1793.

mations in drawing-rooms, finally took visible and outward shape. They grew into resolve and determination, and settled down at last into that regular course of action, in which the body, with a few exceptions and a few intervals only, has ever since continued to persevere.

No meeting of any importance took place until 1805. It was in that year, after a series of unconnected assemblies, when much of the old leaven of aristocratic and popular division at intervals reappeared, that a petition, for the total restoration of their still-withheld franchises, was, after much hesitation, very cautiously suggested. But the Catholic still stooped; he had not acquired the habit of walking upright; he was still a novice in freedom. The petition was proposed, was discussed, was rejected, and by a great majority—336 to 124. The accession of their friends to power, a few months afterwards, seemed to justify a second effort. But it terminated like the first: the usual effects of Whig administrations * soon became percep-

* The Whigs have much to plead in their defence. A party returning to office after a long absence is somewhat, it may be supposed, unaccustomed to the working of the machinery. They retain the old servants of the establishment to keep up the work; the old servants of course prefer their old masters to their new ones. The first years are thus

tible. The Catholics, in their own little republic, were still divided into oppressors and oppressed. The history of the Ryan faction, first conspiracy, then usurpation, is the concise sketch of all leaderships, where the people are not permitted directly or indirectly, through the intervention of some delegated organ, their free and frank veto in public concerns. Mr. Keogh for some time past had been compelled by his infirmities to a philosophic retreat at Mount Jerome in the vicinity of Dublin, and mingled but by intervals in recent Catholic politics. Mr. Ryan undertook to fill the vacuum his absence had created, and for a moment assumed the importance of a leader. His claims to private consideration I believe were not contested; like Mr. Keogh, he had risen from the mercantile body, and carried with him a large portion of its active and inquiring habits. But here his claims to public regard ended: he be-

spent in guarding against or in defeating domestic conspiracies. Hence caution, doubt, timidity: nothing can be attempted until they first have assured themselves upon what ground they stand.—This cannot be done in a moment. In the interval the Catholic gets angry, and treats his former friend as a cold patron, or a concealed foe. The Whig feels the suspicion—tries to remove it—risks a measure—fails—and is turned out by the *subalterns* and the *conspirators*.

gan anew the struggle of his countrymen ; he communicated once more the ancient impulse. This was unquestionably a real service ; but there his pretensions should have ceased ; once the beginning had been made, the duty was done ; the self-constituted chief should have fallen back into the ranks ; the citizen should have sate down with his fellow-citizens. But Mr. Ryan was vain, and vanity in a public man is the most dangerous of all weaknesses. His error was not in assembling his countrymen, nor in assuming or executing the functions of delegate, though with somewhat like presumption, in the year 1805, but in subsequently availing himself of that delegated character when the objects for which it had been entrusted had altogether been accomplished. He applied it to bad purposes, to the purpose of continuing his correspondence with Mr. Fox, and perverting to partial and private views the credit which sprung up from such communications. To this too were added other charges, of a more immediate though inferior importance, the frequent convening of meetings, the summoning of the body by unauthorised and private messages, &c. A series of such factious assemblies were held in his own house at Marlborough Street. A committee, self-constituted, was formed. It was a mere knot of

dependants. The second meeting of this junta took place in Albion's Court, and proceeded at once to act for the entire Catholic body. The Catholic question, in acquiescence with the then views of Mr. Fox, was adjourned *sine die*; and in the place of a petition for redress of grievance, a fulsome compliment was voted to the new viceroy. A third close meeting followed, confirmed the arrangements of the preceding, and attempted to pass a vote of unlimited confidence in the actual ministry. An adjournment, however, to the 13th of March took place; when the Catholics, indignant at these assumptions, raised themselves simultaneously from their depression, and convened by public notice a numerous aggregate meeting of the entire body at the Farming Repository, Stephen's Green. This meeting effectually broke up the oligarchical knot, which had for some time affected to direct the proceedings of the Catholics. The venerable Mr. Keogh appeared on the occasion. His speech, and that of Mr. Lynch, met with the utmost attention: after accusing the sharers in the former meetings of the most absolute spirit of exclusion, and upbraiding them with the irregularity and confusion of their proceedings, he impeaches Mr. Ryan in particular of an assumption of high powers, and of a barter for private profit of public and important

rights ; on these charges he makes in conclusion a proposition for the immediate formation of a new *general* Committee, on the principle and plan of the general committee of 1793. The Convention Act, or rather its interpretation, for a while damped and interrupted these proceedings ; but another meeting, at which Mr. Nangle presided, was held 8th April, 1806. Nothing very specific was then determined, beyond a confirmatory sanction of the resolutions of the last meeting. “ Influenced by these considerations,” say they, (i. e. the utility and necessity of a proper medium or organ to communicate with government and the legislature) “ we have formed ourselves into an *Association*, in which we hope shall be comprised the full respectability of the Catholic body.” This suggestion was immediately followed up, and the subjoined resolution unanimously adopted ;—“ That our chairman and secretary be directed to give intimation of our proceedings to the Catholic noblemen and principal gentlemen of Ireland, and to request their co-operation thereunto.” No distinct intimation (probably owing to an apprehension of being affected by the penalties of the Convention Act) appears to have been given of the nature of this intended association, whether it was meant to be a representative, or simply a self-consti-

tuted or aggregate body, after the manner of a club. The analogy to former cases would suggest the latter opinion; the reference to the proceedings of the parochial meetings the former. A series of meetings summoned in 1807, evince indeed rather a complex combination of the two systems; the parishes of Dublin sending delegates, and a certain number of gentlemen attending in their individual capacities, at the request of an aggregate meeting, to assist them. The public business, however, for a very considerable time, was managed solely, by means of committees and sub-committees, chosen by aggregate meetings, adjourning from time to time, and with powers only for that particular occasion and purpose. The meeting on the 18th of April 1807, and the withdrawal of the petition on the motion of Mr. Keogh, who still continued the business of the Catholics, finally dissolved, after a short and precarious existence, this feeble attempt at a second committee.

The aggregate meeting of January 1808, held in William Street, was of the same complexion. It produced nothing in the shape of a permanent body. The old committee continued lingering on with a few fragments, gleaned together from the wrecks of the delegation of 1792, the shreds of the thirty-six addressers, half

under the influence of aristocratic pretension, half under the direction of the mercantile interest, till, on the 24th of May 1809, a more numerous assembly was convened in the same place; and, after considerable discussion, a better description of organization was adopted. For the guidance of future proceedings, a committee was constituted *pro tempore*, from the aggregate of the materials just mentioned, affecting in reality, though deprecating in name, the principle of representation. It was in great degree the revival of the old general committee.* A point of union was thus fixed: public exertions were directed to a uniform and permanent purpose; Catholic strength was invigorated: Catholic weight and Catholic power were increased.

During the remainder of the summer, nothing of importance occurred. The general committee so constituted met on the 8th of November, and agreed to petition. On adjourning, they appointed a sub-committee to carry these intentions into effect. The General Committee met at various times, during that and the succeeding year, under the same form, and for the purpose

* See the Appendix, for the Resolutions. They comprise the form of the organization.

of conducting measures connected with their petitions for relief.

In the year 1810, as appears from the circular of the General Committee,* it was in the contemplation of its leaders to extend its influence by means of *local* committees, or boards holding communication with the general committee; but this system was not pursued, and it limited itself to the occasional local meetings, which took place from time to time, principally during the period of the assizes, in most of the Catholic counties of the South.

This breaking up anew of the Catholic mind, soon brought to the surface a new series of public characters. The chilling influences of old age, the visitation of malady, the recollections of the late rebellion, his suspicious connexion with men who had been its first victims, and the consciousness that the vigilance of the government was always on the watch, that the jealous ear of Dionysius was always open to every murmur, more and more induced that retirement from public observation which had been

* “ *July 30.* Resolved, That the establishment of a permanent Board holding communication with the general committee in Dublin has been deemed, in several counties, highly useful to the interests of the Catholic cause.”

lately remarked in the conduct and policy of John Keogh. But it was no longer in the power of any single man to control, or to send back to the places wherein they had slept, the loosened tides of popular emotion. New men with fresher feelings, intermingled indeed with a few of the old aristocracy, who lent a gravity and dignity to the proceedings, suddenly burst up behind him. It was in one of those meetings that the man to whom, chief of living men, the cause is indebted for its success, first appeared before that body, which he was afterwards destined to wield with a power far surpassing the utmost capacity or exertions of his predecessors. The Catholic Barristers, for the first time, appeared on the side of the people.* Their habits of business, their easy eloquence, their vivid appeals

* Catholic barristers, up to the period of which we are speaking, were only known as pensioners—the strings which the ministers held to move and direct the Catholic body. Fortunately their efficiency diminished in direct ratio to their servility. From an early hour the bar was crowded with these adventurers. They first entered (taking the oaths) as recusants, or converted Papists: then, on the relaxation, they continued, under a mongrel character, a something between Papists and Protestants. The government first tried to entrap and persecute them; but finding them too slippery, at last agreed to use them. See *Boulter's* lugubrious complaints.—(*Letters passim.*)

to the passions of the multitude, their recklessness of Protestant censure, their broad, emphatic, and sometimes daring statement of wrongs and grievances, indicated to the close observer that a new epoch had commenced in Catholic affairs, and that the time could not be long deferred, in which the whole people down to the lowest citizen should be engaged as allies in the great cause. But with this too, it must be remembered they brought some alloy with the gold; the peculiar habits of their profession, the party cunning, the factious view, the intrigue, the artifice, and the deceit;—a want of singleness and loftiness of purpose became conspicuous, and the noblest of causes was often degraded, in consequence of the introduction of this new ingredient, by the most contemptible and miserable of means. The ostensible chiefs of the body were of course those few members of the peerage, who supported with a wise and sagacious patriotism the exertions of their fellow-citizens. Lord Fingal, Lord Gormanstown, Lord Trimleston, and Lord Ffrench, with two or three of the Catholic baronetage, usually dignified the chair of their meetings, but for a considerable time left little or no impression on their deliberations. Their characters were singularly diverse. Lord Fin-

gal had all the better peculiarities of his order, with qualities which had borrowed from the trials through which they had passed, only a stronger tinge of virtuous and steady indignation at the wrongs which still continued to oppress his country. From his placid lips there never burst an unworthy complaint : he boasted and promised little ; but neither what he promised, did he ever fail to perform. His countenance, full of benignity, was a fit expression of the interior man : he was mild and modest : but there was also in him the firmness and honour of a true gentleman, the spirit and perseverance of a true patriot. Through all the after vicissitudes of the body, Lord Fingal never deserted its banners : he screened by his individual character, pure even from the breath of calumny, the errors and offences of an easily-excited people : he often threw himself into the breach, and singly repelled by the weight of his own consideration the reproof and interference of the government. Conciliating to all ; bearing all in patience ; sacrificing in nothing and to none his principle ; after a series of the most contrasted events, exhibiting the most opposite principles, he fully succeeded in producing a spirit of unanimity until then unknown in the Catholic

community, and left to his son an inheritance, the brightest which a father can transmit to his children, the praise of having successfully done his duty in difficult times to his country, and the glory of sitting down in the evening, full of years and honours, under the shadow of that national happiness, to obtain which he had cheerfully spent the morning and noon, of his existence.

Lord Gormanstown possessed in some measure the calm mind, and adopted in the entire the moderate and winning policy, of Lord Fingal. The temper and sobriety of both their characters placed in a still more striking and singular relief the bold and rudely-fashioned temperament of Lord Ffrench. There was nothing of the nobleman about this man; no grace; no soothing; no art; his mind and body were in strict unison, and adapted with a sort of marvellous felicity to each other. To look at his sallow and *farouche* countenance, lit with the gleamings of habitual sarcasm; to hear the deep whining, and the exaggerated roughness of his western accent; to see the huge giant frame, the unpowdered hair, the long club-cue, the loose and lumbering coat, the slouching step, and the studious and somewhat savage neglect of this extraordinary personage—was

to bring over the imagination loose recollections of a French revolutionist, blended indeed with peculiarities essentially Irish, a composition inexplicable, and sometimes alarming, for which you had no type or interpretation in either country. Every thing about him, mind or body, was energy. His action came coarse, and swinging, and negligent, but always with a certain conviction of mastery, on the table. He thought vigorously and roughly; he spoke harshly; whatever was the topic, he cast through all, grave, or lofty, or indignant, as it might be, fantastic fragments of Irish humour, which left surprise, and pain, and emotion, strangely jumbled together, in the mind even of the most habitual of his hearers. The field in which circumstances had placed him, it was quite obvious was by no means that, which was the most fitted either for the man or his works. He was no orator, but he left you fearfully convinced that he might be something more. He seemed to have been born many centuries too late, and would have figured with far more effect as a general of the Kilkenny confederacy, than as a chairman of a small committee meeting in a back room in Dublin. The very look and gesture of the man was proof that there was hardly room enough in the existing state of the country and

the laws, for a full development of his energies : others talked of reasoning—he seemed to think of nothing but of action. In the age in which he lived people gazed on him with a sort of stupor, as an anomaly in accord with no class or with no feeling of their body. He had little influence with any ; they heard him for his rank and for his strangeness, and when absent they turned round and willingly forgot that he had ever been amongst them.

Nothing can be imagined more perfectly opposed to Lord Ffrench, than a nobleman with whose name the Catholics had been long familiar—I mean Lord Trimleston. The early years of his life had been passed in feudal France ; his opinions, his feelings, his whole *manière d' tre*, had been characteristically and indelibly affected by this sinister circumstance. The French revolution had burst on him in the middle of a circle of polished and chosen friends. Blinded by their sufferings and wrongs, he condemned every attempt, however limited or wise, for the attainment of their unquestionable rights on the part of the people. He saw nothing in that awful regeneration, but revolt against the best of institutions, insolent rebellion against the most sacred of titles, outrageous and detestable principles, unjustified by a single grievance, un-

redeemed by a single good. His person, his manners, his accent, were disagreeably and extravagantly French. All that he said or did, belonged to a class unknown and unfelt in Ireland. It was an emigrant from the army of Condé you listened to, and not to an indignant Catholic peer, the natural protector of an aggrieved people, rousing and directing, on the just principles of constitutional freedom, the combined exertions of his Catholic countrymen. If he addressed an assembly of rich merchants, or turbulent and enthusiastic tradesmen, if he stood in face of a crowding and anxious peasantry, it was of "the patrician blood of the Barnwells" only that he deigned to speak, and not of the broad and embracing slavery of an entire country. Such a man had no clue to the popular mind. He had little in common with Irishmen. They spoke different idioms. They could not understand each other. He occasionally appeared at public meetings—but his name more than his presence was sought after. Till the period of the total secession, resulting from the Veto quarrel, he appeared to have something like an influence over the aristocratic portion of the body; but this was an imaginary power, a sort of title by courtesy, conceded good-naturedly to the mere vanity of the individual. The real authority re-

sided in the committee and the sub-committees ; and both were under the immediate control and direction of the men of business, the barristers.

Amongst these latter, by far the most remarkable was Mr. Scully. He had received from nature far more of the statesman than of the orator. He was grave, cautious, secret, profound : no ebullition of vanity appeared upon the surface ; no involuntary revealings of feeling detected or even hinted the inward man. No person could more maturely weigh all the advantages of an arrangement before he submitted it to the passions of the multitude for adoption, or when once thoroughly penetrated with its utility, in despite of aristocratic sneer or popular clamour, no man was more unlikely to recede. Yet he seldom ventured into the enemy's camp ; and when he did risk attack, it was in those slight flank movements, those off-skirmishings of resolutions or debate, which were intended to produce little more than the momentary annoyance of an antagonist.* Few of his measures had

* Witness the petty manœuvres, I might use a much stronger term, connected with the celebrated *Witchery Resolutions*. In adopting the factious virulence of Lord D——, the leaders sacrificed the interests of the body to their own subserviency, or to their own interests. If the deed were bad, the manner of doing it was worse. Nothing

a bold and comprehensive character about them: he contented himself with that wearing, Fabian system of tactics, which was not indeed much calculated to dazzle or astound, and furnished little immediate gratification to his political self-love; but at the same time was certain of its result, and sooner or later in the fulness of a vigorous maturity brought forth its purpose. It is true indeed that the period for a more energetic description of warfare had not yet arrived: but it depended far more, after all, on the temper of the man, than on the circumstances of the time or place. There was a surly and sometimes a clumsy kind of Machiavelism about him, which more or less tinctured his entire policy. He hated the direct line, and preferred coming at the most obvious consequences by a circuit. "He could not take his tea without a stratagem;" nor could he be persuaded to make a people free or happy, without first deceiving them. His whole being was lawyerlike: he special-pleaded great rights, and would not have disdained to slip in through the half-open gates of the constitution, on a quibble. He was an admirable parrier; made few thrusts, but seldom received a blow. During his administration (for could surpass the folly of such an act but the perfect duplicity with which it was conducted.

such it may be truly called), the Catholic body erred little, retrograded little, but advanced little also. He tacked about, he curvetted, he made zigzag movements, but he never lost ground. He was singularly adapted to its then position, when prudence was far more essential than enthusiasm: there were times, later, when enthusiasm perhaps was far more necessary than prudence; and they also have been fully answered. Yet it would be vain to deny that Mr. Scully was gifted with qualities of a far higher order. His work on the *Penal Laws* is the work of a constitutionalist and a philosopher, as well as of a lawyer; and though the advocate is too constantly swimming like oil upon the surface, it is unquestionably the most thoroughly satisfactory exposure of the anti-social code which has ever been submitted to the public. The style is throughout in a strain of anxious expostulation, of justifiable earnestness, which evinces that Mr. Scully's powers were not only distinguished by the first-rate logical acumen, but were by no means inconsiderable in the lower regions of popular eloquence. Yet Mr. Scully was no orator: his person was unfavourable; low, squat, clumsy, it could only be redeemed from those physical defects by the general cast of his countenance. Yet even there was little which was not of a very

secondary order. The prominent nose, the broad forehead, was forgotten, in the small, weak, and almost inexpressive eye. The general contour has been likened to Napoleon's: but two faces, in their real character, could not be imagined more absolutely opposed. One was coarse, stout, bluff, common sense, with lines here and there of shrewdness or cunning; the other had all the delicate refinements, with all the substantial qualities, of the highest order of human mind. His action was irregular, rude, but often emphatic: his enunciation measured, yet unpolished; he employed public speaking as the means only—the carrying of the measure was the end. No man was less ostensibly before the Catholic public, yet no man more thoroughly governed it. He was felt in consequences; the *main de maître* was known only when the event had taken place. It was then the close observer might notice, if ever, a relaxation from his habitual reserve; and the sardonic smiles of triumph which shot over his countenance at a success which he had so patiently and perfectly ensured, were the best evidences how anxiously he sought, and how deeply he valued the enjoyment and retention of political power. During the whole period of his rule, he was absolute; and in whatever manner he chose to show himself

to the body, either through others or in his own person, seldom or ever did he meet with any like a steady or effectual opposition to his measures, or any essential falling off of that habitual respect which men contracted even for his faults.

Co-operating with Mr. Scully, or, in more precise terms, carrying into effect in public what Mr. Scully had resolved on in private, were very many men of unquestionable, though few indeed of commanding talents. The Bar at that time, like the University, was tolerably open to Catholic ambition. It furnished a numerous group of adherents to the new administration, who, content to be noticed in conjunction with the leader in debate, did not for the present aim at admission to the cabinet. Amongst the foremost of these serviceable men was Mr. Hussey. He was a ready every-day speaker ; he had the talent of a clever rifleman ; knew to a hair the point of attack ; could attain it easily and carelessly ; was expert at a sudden sarcasm ; could level an appropriate anecdote with sharp effect, and disappear from the search of his adversary in the very moment he inflicted the wound. Yet he was not deficient in the kindlier characteristics of a public man : no speaker could talk down an angry opponent, when it so pleased

him, into more provoking good-humour, or wipe away with a few words the bitterness of an entire debate. I do not know whether nature favoured him or otherwise in all this. There was something singularly Hibernian, no doubt, in the manner and matter of the entire man. He looked, smiled, and acted the brogue. His red hair and twinkling blue eye were not less idiomatic than his phraseology. This with Irishmen like himself might have told; with others it was worse than useless—injurious. Yet with all this he had many merits: he was an admirable political colleague; no man in the entire body was better fitted to the Guerilla warfare of a desultory debate. The initiating or conducting of a measure, however, was not the forte of Mr. Hussey: whether it was incapacity, or the indisposition of a gay and volatile nature, he addicted himself but little, or with little effect, to this severer kind of political study. He was a man who received and gave out quickly the impressions of the moment, but he retained nothing. His political enthusiasm was soon exhausted; he retired when others thought he was only commencing, disgusted or fatigued from public affairs. The public regretted their diminished amusement: his rivals, and he had many, rejoiced at his retreat.

A man of very different appearance and character was Mr. Clinch ; who, though a barrister, can scarcely be said to have adopted altogether the popular party. Studious, patient, informed, a perfect master of details, he viewed every subject in its minutest rather than its largest bearings, examined painfully every matter with the microscope in his hand, and elaborated, from the most confused and abstruse materials, conclusions which, when sufficiently understood, were received with wonder by his audience, but found totally useless when attempted to be carried into any real or practical effect. It was Mr. Clinch's misfortune, though in a different sense from Lord Ffrench, to have been born either too early or too late. He would have been venerated in the olden days of black-letter decisions and portly brass-claspt folios, in the times of the Bellarmines and the Scaligers, as a man *singularis et reconditæ sapientiæ*. In the present he might do no dishonour to the venerable judgment bench of the Roman Rota ; but in an assembly of ardent and inquiring Irishmen, whose feelings at all times travel so much quicker than their reason, and who required no quotation from moth-eaten statutes to prove to them the grievances which they found written in deep and enduring letters in their hearts, it

must be confessed that Mr. Clinch's eloquence and learning fell, like manna in the desert, and melted away into thin air, before any one could be met willing or able to collect it. He too, as much as Lord Trimleston, though in somewhat different way, altogether missed the national mind. He went on with it side by side, but always in a parallel direction. There was no point of contact between him and the country; his whole energies were spent in the *strenua inertia*, of solving little difficulties, or raising injuriously little difficulties into great ones. A nation was to be summoned from the tomb, and he went about examining the form and fashion of the sepulchre. Hence few listened, and fewer understood. His support was only of occasional value; almost always heard, in despite of his keen logic, with incredulity, and of his real knowledge, with neglect and impatience, he was always behind or beyond his audience.

——— “ He went on refining,

And thought of convincing, whilst they thought of dining.”

Such a man was too doctrinal, too dogmatic, too much a man of learned saws and nice precedents, for the fierce and fervent realities of ordinary political life. When the coarse struggle and the tumultuous clamour came onward, his

weapons, too delicate for such a warfare, snapt asunder, his voice was lost in the crowd. The fastidiousness of a learned leisure then seized him ; he retired from a conflict in which rougher energies were requisite : he could not fight in so rude a field ; he went home, and sighed in solitude over the fortunes of his country.

But Mr. Clinch was not a solitary instance of this morbid appetite for the learned obscurities of religious and political polemics. Another champion of the church, far more turbulent and warlike, arose in the person of Doctor Dromgoole. To him, as to the Duke of Newcastle, the question was a religious question—nothing but a religious question—and altogether a religious question. His armoury was almost exclusively from the Vatican : the weapon he delighted in was the double-edged sword of scholastic dialectics. The councils, the fathers, the dusty library of ancient and modern controversy, were his classics. Valiant, uncompromising, headstrong, he bore with a sulky composure, on his sevenfold shield of theology, all the lighter shafts of contemporary ridicule, and went on like another Ajax, or the poetic animal to whom he is compared in the Iliad, through staves and stones, to the accomplishment of his “solemn” purpose. His celebrated manifesto against “the Church

triumphant," or the established church of Ireland, created at the time a sort of absurd panic amongst friends and foes.* The anti-Catholic seized with avidity the opportunity of fastening the delirium of an individual on the sane portion of the body, much in as wise and effectual a way as the friends of Don Basilio in the *Barbiere di Seviglia* attempt to talk him into the sudden belief that he is attacked by fever. The Catholics thought it necessary to disclaim the imputation: a ludicrous and injurious precedent.† But Doctor Dromgoole was a champion of the olden times: he scorned to be deterred

* This panic, if we are to trust to the farewell speech of the Earl of Eldon (farewell speeches are rather doubtful things) still continues to agitate the country.

† Ludicrous, because it was attaching to these reveries the importance of sober truth; injurious, because it admitted the necessity of contradicting by *public resolution*, the speech of every individual which should contain opinions at variance with the opinions of the body. The consequences of this position are obvious. If such speeches were to be contradicted every time they were to be made, it is difficult to say where would have terminated the contradictions of the Association. If not, such speeches would necessarily stand as the avowed and recorded opinions of the entire Catholic community. The Catholic leaders were thus led very precipitately into a dilemma: they found sufficient difficulty a little later in getting out of it.

from the good work by the disapproval of "these men of little faith." He persevered unto the end, discharging, even in the moment of his retreat from public life, some of those Parthian shafts of long-nourished hatred which he had brandished so boldly in the earlier part of his career. His latter days were spent with great propriety in the immediate shadow of the Vatican: finding few ears for his truths in Ireland, he had retired to Rome, but whether to organise an "army of the faith," or to import a second Rinuccini for the modern Catholic confederacy, has not been transmitted to posterity. It was not without a smile that the Irish student sometimes met him, in the learned gardens of that capital, maturing with his accustomed leisure of thought and manner some new project "for the salvation of the infidels." In his large bushy eyebrows bent solemnly to the earth, and his ponderous lips, scarcely ever opened but for a dogma or an anathema, and his broad sallow features spread out over an immense head, the signs of the times seemed visibly imprinted; and fresh hopes, at every time that he struck the ground with his heavy cane, appeared to be conjured up by the modern Thaumaturgus, for the glory and regeneration of Catholic Ireland.

To this Duigenan of the Catholic cause might

perhaps be very naturally added, at least by its opponents, the few of the prelacy who now, for the first time, had the courage or indiscretion of lending their names and exertions to those of their suffering fellow-countrymen ; but it would be doing a sort of wrong to such men as Dr. Troy, the Catholic archbishop of Dublin, to comprehend him in the list of such public combatants. He was notorious indeed for the ultraism of his ecclesiastical opinions ; but no man was more indisposed to any undue display of his faculties than that very moderate dignitary. He had passed through times of doubt and difficulty, through ordeals of every variety, with a character respected equally by friend and enemy. The recollections of the past, and a more than usual intimacy with the Castle, now and then bowed him from that upright and elevated bearing, which is so much more natural and easy to the Roman Catholic prelate, as well as to the Roman Catholic layman, of our own times ; but the defect and the evil were restricted to the individual ; the period was gone by, when by the servility of any one, however distinguished, the general interests of the body could be much injured or affected. As a clergyman, Dr. Troy was *sans reproche*. In the same period, in which three prelates of the church of Ireland

had left behind them a sum little less than 400,000*l.*, Dr. Troy had nothing to bequeath to his family or to the public, but the remembrance of his charities, and a debt contracted chiefly in doing good.

Such were the materials with which the new committee had to work; for I purposely omit all mention of those men who at a later period assumed the direction of the Catholic cause, and have been reserved by a singular favour of Providence to witness the glory of its accomplishment. They are the property of another pen; and their conduct and measures, yet too recent to be dealt with in the spirit of a calm and cold justice by a contemporary, must patiently await the search and award of posterity. Even then they were dividing the favour of the multitude with their older servants, and giving evidence the most unequivocal of the good and bad of their future progress. The time was fast approaching when altogether another "birth of men" was to rush up behind the former exhibitors, far more audacious, far more successful,—gifted with firmer will, though scarcely with higher powers,—and who, placed in circumstances which, guiding them far more than they have guided the circumstances, have mainly combined, by some inscrutable disposition of

moral causes, ultimately to produce those great results, which seemed to defy the wisdom of the wisest, and the courage of the bravest before them.

The altercations which had taken place in 1805 and in 1808, had principally arisen from two sources of discord, which continued long to affect the body ; the constant contention for leadership ; and the apprehension of incurring, by any acts of a bold and independent nature, the displeasure of the superior powers. The first had led to very mischievous consequences : it had prevented the Catholics, as we have seen, from adopting for a considerable period any steady or well-organised body for the transaction of public business, or the proper communication with government or their friends in either house of parliament : the second produced a very wavering policy in the presentation of their petitions, which, instead of being brought forward as the expression of public grievance, in proportion as its pressure began more sensibly to be felt, were offered or withdrawn with a view only to the accommodation of parliamentary parties, and employed as an instrument of no mean efficacy, in the political warfare for power and place. But a principle of discord far more extensive, far more dangerous, far

more enduring, which continued for nearly eight successive years to distract and embitter the proceedings of the Catholics, in addition to the evils just noted, had lately sprung up amongst them. The precincts of a sketch * fortunately

* The history of the Veto is still involved in much obscurity. From the evidence which has already appeared, we may conclude—1. That the origin of the measure should be ascribed to the Board of English Catholics. In 1791, anxious for immediate admission into the pale of the constitution, they attempted to establish a church, *à la Utrecht*, independent of the Roman see, but preserving the old dogmas,—and adopted as their designation the significant name of Protestant Catholic Dissenters. These opinions were embodied in an oath, which they offered to take in lieu of the oath of supremacy.—*Plowden's History of Ireland since the Union*, vol. iii. p. 787. 2. That Sir John Cox Hipplesley seized these suggestions, and matured them into the project of Veto.—*Substance of the speech of Sir J. C. Hipplesley, Bart. on seconding the motion of the Right Hon. H. Grattan*, 1810. 3. That Mr. Pitt adopted this plan, and intended to make it part of his arrangements for Ireland.—*Lord Grenville's speech in 1810*. 4. That Mr. Pitt, through the agency of Lord Castlereagh, induced the Irish bishops to acquiesce in the proposition, and to sign the celebrated resolutions of 1799.—*Resolutions of 1799*. 5. That these concessions were made on the part of the prelacy in consequence of a distinct understanding that such concession should be followed by immediate emancipation. A similar promise obtained from the Irish Catholic laity their sanction of the Legislative Union.—*Lord Grenville's speech in 1810*.—*His*

preclude both the reader and the writer from entering much at length into this celebrated

letter, to his friends in Oxford, to Lord Fingal, &c. 6. That in 1805, Mr. Pitt declined fulfilling this promise, and refused to bring forward the measure of Catholic emancipation; that naturally he abstained from any allusion to the conditions which he had required for such promise from the bishops; and that Mr. Ponsonby and the other advocates for emancipation, with very few exceptions, were ignorant of such arrangement.—*Mr. Ponsonby's speech in 1810.* 7. That the rejection of the petition in 1805 induced Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan to suggest, when the petition was again brought forward in 1808, the necessity of conciliating more effectually Protestant prejudices; and that Lord Fingal in the first instance, and Dr. Milner (to whom Lord Fingal referred) in the second, made known the resolutions of 1799, and gave (substantially at least) their assent to the proposition of vesting a negative on the nomination of Catholic bishops in the crown.—*Mr. Ponsonby's speech in 1810, with the accompanying documents. Dr. Milner's letter to Mr. Ponsonby, and minutes of the conversation which followed it.* 8. That Lord Fingal was the sole delegate of the Catholics of Ireland, and Dr. Milner the accredited agent of the Irish Catholic bishops; but, that it may be doubted whether their powers extended to the discussion of such important matters as those comprehended in the proposition of the Veto; and that at all events they cannot stand exculpated by the circumstances of the case, of indiscretion and impropriety in having concealed their negotiations from the bodies for whom they at that moment were acting. 9. That Dr. Milner's subsequent retractation arose probably from his apprehension of the opposition which was likely to be given by the Irish pre-

controversy ; but its influence upon Catholic politics, the check which it gave to the natural progress of their cause, the fatal animosities which it generated, the difficulty with which they were finally subdued, are sufficient apologies for its introduction.

In the year 1808 Lord Fingal was intrusted with the management of the petition, and with whatever communications might become necessary with our friends and advocates in either house of parliament ; he had scarcely arrived when he was invited to a conference with Mr. Ponsonby, and subsequently with other distinguished supporters of the Catholic cause. These conferences afterwards proved of the most injurious consequence to the Catholic community. Whether from inadvertence, or zeal, or injudicious submission to the opinions of parliamentary advisers, Lord Fingal appears precipitately to have consented to the proposition of a

lacy and laity ; and that this opposition was grounded in great measure on the rejection of their petition, notwithstanding the large offers which had just accompanied it. 10. That the Veto controversy was subsequently kept up by the wounded vanity, servility, and jealousies, of individuals, and did not finally cease until it was at last extinguished by the dissolution of the Board, and the subsequent apathy of the Roman Catholics.—*Plowden's History of Ireland, &c.* vol. iii. pp. 677—695. 833—875.

measure for which certainly he had no adequate or specific authority from the body itself. Mr. Grattan presented the petition to the House of Commons on the 25th May, and in the course of his speech observed, that he was empowered to make a proposition to the house on the part of the petitioners, which would remove all danger that might be apprehended from the admission of Catholics into the constitution, and would fully establish the moral and political integrity of the whole British empire. It was a proposal to allow the crown a direct negative interference, should the prayer of the petitioners be granted, in the future appointment of their bishops. Mr. Ponsonby went still further and stated, "that he was authorised to say that the Catholic clergy were willing, in the event of the measure before the house being acceded to, that the appointment of every Catholic bishop in Ireland should in future finally vest in the King."—The speech of Lord Grenville in the Lords, on the 27th of the same month, was still more minute and explicit. He went into the history of the measure, and gave it to be understood, "that it was part of the system (the provision for the clergy was another) which was in contemplation at the time of the Union."—These proffers were, however, unavailing.

Mr. Perceval, the then Premier, scornfully rejected them ; and the motion for taking the petitions into consideration was lost by large majorities in both houses.

But this was a very minor portion of the disasters which this fatal proposition soon entailed upon the Roman Catholics. The morning after the debate, May 26, Dr. Milner, the agent of the Catholic bishops of Ireland, published a protest against the use which had been made of his name in the debate of the preceding evening. In Ireland the feeling of public reprobation was still stronger. The moment the reports of the parliamentary debates arrived, there was a general burst of indignation throughout the country. The public mind was thrown into the utmost agitation. The laity revolted at the idea of the ministers of their religion becoming exposed to the corruption of the minister.* The

* “ And if the superior power were always in a disposition to act conscientiously in this matter for those with whom that power is at variance, has it the capacity and means of doing this? How can the lord lieutenant form the least idea of their merits, so as to discern which of the Popish clergy is fit to be made a bishop? It cannot be; the idea is ridiculous. He will hand them over to lords lieutenants, governors of counties, justices of peace, and other persons, who, for the purpose of vexing and turning to derision this

clergy were roused by a common impulse to the assertion of their spiritual independence. On the 14th and 15th of May a national synod was summoned. It passed a condemnatory resolution of the late proposition, signed by twenty-three prelates, three only of the entire body (originally subscribers to the resolutions of 1799) having dissented. This impression was ardently seconded by the people. The address attempted to be got up to Lord Fingal, and designed more to sanction the measure than to exculpate that nobleman from the share which he had taken in the late proceedings, did not obtain more than fifty signatures, of whom forty-six afterwards retracted. On the other side the addresses of thanks to the bishops were signed by not less than forty thousand persons. The resolutions of Louth followed. Ulster, with the exception of a single individual, was unanimous. Munster and Connaught, with few dissentients, concurred in the same opinion. This demonstration of public opinion produced its effect. In the

miserable people, will pick out the worst and most obnoxious they can find amongst the clergy to sit over the rest. Informers, talebearers, perverse and obstinate men, flatterers, who turn their backs upon their flocks to court the Protestant gentlemen of the country, will be the objects of preferment."—*Burke's Works*, vol. vi. p. 290.

petition intended to have been presented in 1809, all mention of Veto was cautiously avoided. In 1810 the bishops again met in synod, and passed resolutions still more clear and decisive. They were intended to be final ; and accordingly form the great point of reference in all the subsequent discussions. The General Committee then sitting seconded and supported these resolutions, and returned the bishops thanks in a meeting assembled at D'Arcy's, on the 2nd of March, without a division or even a debate. In the same year the petition of the Catholics was again presented to both houses ; and Mr. Grattan, in compliance with his instructions, explicitly declared to the House of Commons, that the Catholics had refused all concurrence and assent to the securities which he had originally suggested in 1808. Such declaration of the unalterable resolution of the clergy and laity of Ireland ought to have quenched all further discussion. But this controversy, like all others which had preceded it, was used chiefly as an instrument for the gratification of private jealousies, and the infliction of private wrongs. The great mass of the people had unequivocally pronounced against the proposition ; and the bishops had directed or followed (it is not quite clear which) the opinion and decision of the people. This perhaps was

an additional motive with the aristocracy to persevere in their dissent. Few of their body joined their voices with those of the large mass of their country : they made common cause with Lord Fingal, in whose person they considered themselves insulted, and for many years afterwards were still found in concurrence with the old party of the English Catholics (from whom all these differences had originated), encouraging unfortunately the feud which had so long counteracted the energies and deeply injured the best interests of the country.

But these discussions were on the point of being soon interrupted, not indeed by the returning spirit of union and good feeling, but by a power which hitherto had been little apprehended by the Roman Catholics. Their discussions and dissensions had for some time back attracted the attention of government. Though little in connexion as yet with the people, the Catholic Committee even then was considered formidable. The Committee of 1809 had been constituted with great care and caution. The discussions at that period on the Convention act had suggested the necessity of avoiding any appearance of delegation, though by an express clause it was provided, " that nothing therein contained should prevent the right of his Ma-

jesty's subjects to petition his Majesty or the parliament." In the last resolutions of the meeting from which the Catholic Committee had originated, this clause is especially referred to : but, as if anticipating the jealousy of government, the same resolution declared, " that the noblemen and gentlemen aforesaid are not representatives of the Catholic body, or any portion thereof; nor shall they assume or pretend to be representatives of the Catholic body, or any portion thereof." This salutary precaution was however forgotten in the meeting which took place at the Farming Repository in the following July. A considerable alteration was adopted. The last resolution appoints a committee to be composed of the thirty-six members for Dublin, and ten gentlemen from each county in Ireland. This committee was embodied for the purpose of drawing up an address to the King, a remonstrance to the British nation, and a petition to parliament, to be presented at the beginning of the next session. It was still imagined by this specific statement of the purposes for which it was formed, that it would stand within the limits of the law, and thus preclude the possibility of any interference on the part of government. But the Catholics had calculated without much knowledge of the motives or characters of those

men with whom they had to deal. The attack was directed, not against any infringement of the law, but against the existence of the Committee itself.

The Convention act, passed in 1793, had been originally framed by Lord Clare with a view to break up the organization of the United Irishmen. It had now lain dormant for eighteen years, and the Catholics had been permitted without interruption by every successive administration during that period, to collect and express the will of their body in the manner most agreeable to themselves. Their internal differences did not interfere with the public tranquillity, and had hitherto been rather a source of gratification than uneasiness to that party whose policy it was to divide and weaken their body. But under the Richmond administration, their proceedings were watched with a much stricter scrutiny. It was at length determined to strike a blow which should be decisive. By suppressing the General Committee, it was imagined that with its suppression all discussion must likewise cease. A proclamation, or to speak more correctly, a circular letter, dated Dublin Castle, Feb. 12, 1811, was directed by Mr. W. Wellesley Pole, the then Irish secretary, to every sheriff and magistrate throughout Ireland, requiring them, in pursu-

ance of the Act 33, c. 9, of the king, to arrest all persons connected either actively or passively in the late elections for members or delegates to the General Committee of the Catholics of Ireland. This was the first trial now for many years of the strength and temper of the Catholics. They had not yet come into direct collision with the government. The first encounter was unsuccessful.

But such violent measures were then easy, and success produced no great moral or political result. It might naturally be imagined that a new penal law, like that of the Convention Act, could not so easily accomplish what the penal code in all its ancient entirety had in vain attempted to effect. What it did accomplish was not worth the effort. It produced nothing permanent. It was the wisdom of Xerxes, attempting with iron fetters to chain the sea. The Catholics resisted in the only way then practicable—in their individual capacity: the country was indifferent, and looked on between stupid hope and still more stupid fear. Lord Fingal and several other members of the Committee took their places at a public meeting in defence of the Secretary's proclamation. They were arrested by virtue of a warrant from Chief Justice Downes, and gave bail. The question of the right of delegation

for the purposes of petition was thus brought into court, and solemnly submitted to the adjudication of a jury. It was a great and important question, involving considerations of the highest interest to the constitutional rights of the subject. The country pleaded on one side, and the Castle on the other. Juries were packed with more than ordinary profligacy. Quibbles were ransacked from every bad precedent of arbitrary power. Yet all was ineffectual: by a miracle, rare under any government, but almost unheard of in Ireland, the country at last prevailed. Either the law was too clear for even the obsequious commentators of the Castle, or party spirit for a moment conceded its animosities to the assertion of a common franchise. Dr. Sheridan and Mr. Kirwan, the gentlemen who had been put upon their defence, were acquitted by a Dublin verdict, and the question seemed for a moment to be set at rest. But the victor, as is often the case, marred the victory, in the very instant of its acquisition, by his own folly. The verdict of a jury returned to the Catholics their right of delegation, and they had a noble and dignified course to pursue. Triumph, however, the flush and vanity of an unexpected success (pardonable perhaps in men who had been accustomed only to disappointment),

hurried them onward to a new contest and a certain defeat. The counter-prosecutions against the Chief Justice Downes might honourably and easily have been got rid of: a compromise extorted from the fears, or at least sanctioned with the approbation of the ruling powers, would have established the then-unquestioned privileges of the Catholic, and not rashly put at hazard by evil precedent the very highest privileges of the citizen. It was ruled otherwise:—the attack was pushed on with vigour: the existence of the party was involved in the safety of the individual: all constitutional considerations disappeared: the point in struggle was the credit of a faction. What reasonable man, who measures life by living things, and reads facts and not theories, could for an instant doubt of the result? The case was tried a second time in the person of the Chief Justice: judgment was given against the Catholics:—the judgment was intended to be appealed against, but the Catholics lost spirits, and the demurrers were not even argued. Thus the victory which they had at first obtained was reversed. The Committee was scattered, delegation annihilated, and a common liberty sacrificed, by the indiscretion of individuals, to the chicane and corruption of an arrogant and offended party.

CHAP. VI.

Consequences of the proclamation, and dissolution of the Committee—New plan—Fourth General Committee, or Association, under the name of Board—Proceedings of the Catholics—Continuance of the Veto question—Divisions—General secession of the aristocracy—Injurious effects—Gradual languor and apathy—Insignificance of their proceedings—Final dissolution of the Board.

THE disorganised state into which the body was immediately thrown by this arbitrary construction of a very dubious text, for a time affected the proceedings of the Catholics. They soon recovered their stupefaction: the General Committee had indeed separated, and delegation, even for the purposes of petition, been declared highly penal; but the spirit which brought that body originally together, and had given shape and form to these elements when there was much less affinity between them, still survived, and soon built up a new structure from the fragments of the old one. Out of a voluntary assemblage of the former members, deprecating however with the greatest caution every thing which could be construed into a *represen-*

tative character, arose a new association under an altered title, the body remaining virtually the same: the minister had accomplished nothing more than the changing of one appellation for another; the Catholic *Committee* had become the *Catholic Board*.

The Catholics had thus foiled the minister, and would have rapidly foiled, like the minister, all other enemies who opposed them, had it not been for their friends and for themselves. The only obstacles, really such, which they ever had to encounter in their course, proceeded exclusively from the same source: from their enemies they had drawn only strength and courage. But the dissensions, which had been so largely extended on the Veto question in despite of present depression and despondency, continued unsubdued. At a period when all ought to have been union and concord, the hostile political parties employed every means which lay within their reach to sustain the internal conflict. The English Vetoists kept up constant communications with their friends in Ireland. In 1810, a resolution strongly declaratory of their opinions (the joint suggestion of Lord Grenville and Lord Grey) was circulated amongst the body. It was replaced by a resolution, since notorious in English and Irish

Catholic politics, under the name of the Fifth Resolution of the English Catholics. It was inserted in their petition to the legislature, and signed by the great mass of the English Catholic clergy and laity.* The Irish Catholics were extremely divided : the clergy unanimously, and much the majority of the laity, still retained their opposition to the measure ; but the aristocracy for the most part were favourable. During the year 1811, these differences, with slight variations, continued. The dissensions of the body were seized and taken advantage of both by friends and opponents. Their friends in parliament eulogised the measure ; their enemies made it the *sine quâ non* of their emancipation. Grand juries, &c. petitioned in the same sense, and the question became complicated with innumerable difficulties. The situation in which the Pope stood was urged as an additional argument. He was then in the hands of the French Emperor, and presumed to be under the immediate control and direction of our arch enemy. In 1812 and

* The wording of the resolution is very vague, and might appear perfectly innocuous to persons unacquainted with the *animus* which dictated it. The petition was signed by the four apostolic vicars and two coadjutors, eight peers, thirteen baronets, and eight thousand gentlemen, including three hundred clergymen.

1813 the same scene of unavailing discord prevailed. Application was finally made to the Pope, and in his absence and detention in France, Monsignor, afterwards Cardinal Quarantotti, addressed in 1814 his celebrated letter to Dr. Poynter, which, instead of calming, added only new fuel to their dissensions. Every bearing of the measure continued to be argued by Protestants and Catholics, both in and out of parliament, with an acerbity scarcely known in the earliest discussions of the question.

The Anti-vetoists denounced, and the Vetoists seceded; base motives assumed on either side the badges of their respective parties, and personal ambition and individual selfishness, fought under the banners, to which revenge, interest, or the circumstances of the moment had compelled them. The moderate man shrunk into a craven and a slave, and the independent man became a factious and turbulent partisan. The very suspicion of Vetoism was enough to blot the fairest actions, and to render dubious the purest intentions. No compromise—no half measure;—an abjuration total and absolute of the obnoxious principle was alone accepted. The people became intolerant and despotic: reasoning was discarded: flattery was the sure means of wielding them at will: their favourites first conjured

up their passions, then losing the mastery of the fiend, were obliged implicitly and blindly to obey it. The effect on the aristocracy was scarcely less pernicious. Instead of standing manfully at their posts and maintaining their opinions, until they had been put to the test of sound logic and fair experience, and then nobly surrendering them if found inconsistent with public liberty and public good, they crept ingloriously away from the contest, and allowed themselves to be trampled into obscurity by numbers. This was cowardice, indolence; the places they had vacated were soon taken, and they had the mortification to find, that in their private position they commanded no consideration; they were laughed at by one party, sneered at by the other, and despised by both; and they felt the bitterness of having deserved it. They became affected by the opinions which they professed; they grew little, and crawling, and timid; they were the Serviles, the Ultras, the Emigrés of the body. They had also the extreme disadvantage of having to advocate the worst side of the question. There never was any serious intention of listening to the arrangement; it was thrown out merely for purposes of division, and the result did ample justice to the Machiavelian policy of

the proposer.* The true patriotism and the true wisdom at such a period, would have been to have rejected all consideration of the matter *in limine*, without reference to any specific superiority of one mode of arrangement to another : but neither aristocracy nor people then knew the resources which experience and suffering had insensibly treasured up within them.† They wished

* Mr. Burke's opinions were strictly justified by the entire of this negotiation. "If," says he (*in his Letter to Dr. Hussey*), "you have not wisdom enough to make common cause, they will cut you off one by one. I am sure that the constant meddling of your bishops and clergy with the Castle, and the Castle with them, will infallibly set them ill with their own body. All the weight which the clergy have hitherto had to keep the people quiet, will be wholly lost if this once should happen. At best you will have a marked schism, and more than one kind; and *I am greatly mistaken if this is not intended, and diligently and systematically pursued.*"

† The *Veto* was an old expedient; but never having been fairly tried, both Protestant and Catholic were not well aware of its pernicious efficacy. In Lord Limerick's Registry bill already noticed, an additional clause had been introduced: enacting, "that one priest should be registered for each parish; that the nomination of his successor should be vested in the grand jury, with a *veto* in the privy council, and lord lieutenant," &c. Bishops, by the same bill, were to be banished altogether; and the registered priest compelled, under pain of transportation, and felony of death in case of

to seize by a compendious barter, what ought to have been gained by effort and perseverance. Emancipation seemed immeasurably distant; they sold the future for the present. Above all, there was no apology for disunion: it was

return, to inform against them. This enactment was clear and consistent. It was framed in the sense and with the usual object of a penal statute. The modern proposition purported to be "a conciliatory settlement,"—"an adjustment,"—"a security;" which, in perfect reason, might be demanded on one side and conceded on the other. But the analogies on which this reasoning was founded were by no means exact. The Irish Catholic church stands in a very peculiar predicament. It is paid exclusively by the people. The only reasonable ground on which a government can pretend to such interference, is the concession of temporalities. This was the principle (and a just one in my mind) of the entire resistance which the emperors made to the encroachments of the popes. A sovereign or state granting temporalities, no matter under what form (whether of glebe, tithe, or pension), has a right to be satisfied with the character and conduct of the grantees, or holders of these grants. But it so happens in the Irish Catholic church, that the people, and not the minister, is the grantor. In the people then, and not in the minister, if there be any question on the matter, should this Veto in strict justice reside. It is very true, that a *regium donum* may alter all this; but until such *regium donum* be given and received, the demand or desire of such interference is altogether preposterous. The government seems to have felt this, and rejected wisely both burden and favour from the present bill.

treason—it was blindness—and worse than all, it was very nearly suicide.

The Catholic Board, deserted by “its natural leaders,” as they ostentatiously called themselves, and left to the unmingled and uncontrolled sway of its own vicious free-will, soon sunk into a noisy and discreditable debating club, dwindling away day after day, and at last exhibiting to the contempt of its adversaries, an evidence only of the incorrigible propensity to feud and division which had so long disgraced the Catholic body. The sudden changes in foreign affairs considerably increased this depression. England was no longer awed by the apprehension of foreign invasion. Napoleon had fallen in 1814; and though a momentary gleam of hope seemed to have returned at the period of his escape from Elba, it fled with nearly the same rapidity with which it came. The Catholic Board was now left to itself: with a hostile administration watching jealously all its movements, its forces diminished at home, its enemies augmented abroad, it found itself incapable of maintaining its position. It trailed on for a short period a feeble existence, now and then recalling to the recollection of the public, by the abrupt and impotent violence of its resolutions, some faint traces of its former

importance. Even that too soon passed away. It at last sunk into absolute insignificance, by the gradual secession of its few remaining members, and expired without a struggle, and almost without a blow.

CHAP. VII.

Universal inertness of the Catholic body—Causes thereof—Difficulty of sustaining public excitement—Arrival of the King—His farewell letter—Not acted on—Disappointment—Continued despondency of the Catholics—Means of rousing them—Defects of former plans—How to be remedied—Union of all parties—New plan projected by Mr. O'Connell, aided by Mr. Sheil—Difficulties to encounter : surmounted—Establishment of the Fifth General Committee, or late Catholic Association—Immediate advantages—Suppression of local outrage—Pacification of the country—Sympathy of all classes—Union of the Aristocracy, Clergy, and People—Measures of the Association—Establishment on an extensive scale of a new Catholic fund.—Rapid progress—Sanguine hopes—Relief bill of 1825—Preliminary and collateral measures—Relief bill and Freehold and Pension bill rejected—The Suppression Association bill, commonly called the Algerine bill—passed—The Association attempted to be suppressed.

ON the dissolution of the Catholic board, every one seemed to have returned to a state of inertia, from which there existed little hope of effectually rousing them in future. The attempt had been made and failed; the experiment was discouraging; the country seemed once more consigned over to irredeemable apathy. Public

opinion in Ireland, and public opinion in England, are not to be measured by the same standard. In England it is, like its civilization, the slow but robust growth of many centuries ; it has risen out of the cool study of great political and commercial questions, out of the slow comparison of their principles with their exemplifications in existing government, out of a tranquil and persevering observation of the influence of both on all classes of society in the neighbouring countries, particularly in France and America, and a keen and often an involuntary application of the common-sense conclusions drawn from such comparison to their own. In Ireland every thing is partial, every thing is momentary, every thing is impulse ; there is no standard, or the standard changes every day. Upon the great middle layer of English society no question falls without leaving its lasting impression. Upon a corresponding, though by no means a similar class in Ireland, the utmost which can be expected, is a strong but transient sentiment, ruffling for a moment the surface, but then leaving the depths as dead and as sluggish as before. The Irish mind, like the waters of the Mediterranean, is easily roused and easily calmed ; the English, like those of the Atlantic, requires something more than a passing gust of agitation to rouse it from the abyss wherein it had reposed. Once ex-

cited indeed by the force of some enduring public motive, the storm will rage, and the waves prevail; nothing less than the intervention of a god can then allay its wrath, or charm it back into its former repose. In a word, the Irish act on belief, the English on conviction—one *feels*, the other *knows*—reason in general is the guide of one nation, passion of the other, and one impression lasts, and the other passes away. I know not whether, for purposes like the present, such peculiarity in the natural temperament be an advantage or the reverse; but this one assertion may assuredly be hazarded, that its nice and judicious management has always been one of the most difficult tasks in the province of the Irish popular leader. To excite has never been difficult, but to keep the steam up to its original pressure, without risking an explosion on the one side, and on the other avoiding that tendency to relapse into former coolness, incidental to natures so singularly excitable,—has been indeed a problem, which in almost every instance of Irish politics has eluded the intellect and defied the exertion of the most zealous and sagacious patriots. Nor could there be a stronger illustration of this position than the period which is actually before us. It was quite extraordinary, the thick obstruction, the flat and utter lethargy, which in a

moment replaced the former menace and tumult, the high-crested defiance, the unchangeable resolve, the bold action of the body. The component portions of their assembly had flown back to their original situations; the aristocracy, the clergy, the merchant, had all resolved into their respective classes. The very action of their opposite and balanced forces had produced rest; they crouched, and slept; their very friends sickened at the unavailing attempt to raise to a level with other citizens a caste essentially inferior; they gave the task up in despair; a pact of eternal silence was struck; the Whig was to enjoy the cheap reputation of liberality, and the Catholic was not to mar with injudicious complaint the political views or influence of the Whig. The Catholic spirit had totally passed away; the dead body only was left behind.

From this disgraceful state of lethargy the Catholics were momentarily aroused by a very remarkable event. In 1821, the King expressed his gracious intention of visiting Ireland. The intelligence was received by all classes with the most unbounded joy. Such visits had been most rare in the history of that country; and had usually been undertaken with far different feelings and for far different purposes than the diffusion of tranquillity and peace. But little

doubt could in the present instance exist of the beneficent objects of the royal visitor. It was not to be supposed, that he could have been prompted to such a measure by a puerile anxiety to see, for the first time, a remote portion of his kingdom, or a desire to exhibit himself ostentatiously to the admiration of his loyal subjects of Ireland. Catholics and Protestants both agreed to consider it an augury of happier times; the Catholic trusting with his usual precipitation to his own sanguine wishes; the Protestant sagaciously acquiescing in the convictions of the Catholic. An armistice, or suspension of existing hostilities, was readily concluded between both contending parties. The influential men on either side, in accordance with the royal recommendation, sacrificed or repressed all former animosities: reconciliation dinners were given,—and meetings held, in which the Catholic leaders on one side, and the corporation leaders on the other, pledged themselves solemnly to an oblivion of all past differences, and to a union of exertion in future for the benefit and prosperity of their common country.* On the 17th August,

* The fraternal embraces of Mr. O'Connell and Alderman Bradley King are not yet forgotten. They were as vehement and as transitory as most other "eternal pledges" of the kind.

the King entered Dublin amidst the enthusiastic acclamations of all classes of his Irish subjects. No lamentation of grievance, no petition for redress, was heard during the whole period of the royal visit. Every thing looked happiness, harmony, and good order. The Catholics, with a temperance (it has been given a worse name) that was the astonishment of all Europe, refrained from the slightest allusion to their oppressed condition. Mr. O'Connell, Mr. O'Gorman, were the first to proffer, at the head of the Catholics, their unbounded devotion to his gracious Majesty. Every where he was hailed by popular enthusiasm as the extinguisher of faction, the healer of religious discord, the harbinger of future grace, the father of all his people. It is said that these manifestations of affection made a deep impression on the royal heart. He pressed the national symbol to his breast, assured his Irish subjects of his unalterable protection, and left their shores in tears, overpowered by the acclamations of "his faithful people." On his departure, he directed Lord Sidmouth to address them a farewell letter full of the most excellent counsel. But, alas! it recommended impossibilities. It advised peace and union, but the means to effect them were still withheld. The Catholics, in despite of past experience, were for

a long time undeceived. They clung for months afterwards to the wretched illusion. But no change took place—the same men continued in office—the same measures were pursued by the same men. Nothing was done to raise the Catholics—nothing was done to depress their enemies. The Letter was regarded as a mere idle proclamation for temporary purposes. The Protestant laughed at the credulity of the Catholic, and scornfully resumed his ancient ascendancy : the Catholic, ashamed and indignant at the deception, sunk at once into his former lethargy.

These disappointments, but much more the discord which had been bequeathed by the Veto quarrel, and the weakness which ensued on the secession of the aristocracy, kept the Catholics for some time longer altogether sunk in this miserable state of despondency. They felt they had been duped and debased, and the consciousness of their feebleness and degradation closely adhered to them. All meetings ceased; the very voice of complaint was scarcely heard; an universal torpor prevailed; every one seemed to have despaired of his country. It was then, if ever since the first formation of their committees, that the Catholics had attained that perfect state of “temperance and moderation,” which has been so frequently recommended to them by friend

and enemy. Nothing contributed to break it for two entire years : neither petition, nor remonstrance, nor speech, nor assembly of any note, was heard of. The entire body seemed to have relapsed into their ancient sluggishness, and to have surrendered their cause to the arbitration of blind chance, or the choice and convenience of their enemies. It was a wretched and successless policy. Nothing was demanded ; and nothing was given. The gentry continued degraded—the people continued oppressed. It was made clear to the capacity of every man that something more than mere passive submission to injury was requisite to work out the liberation of a country. It was made clear that nothing but that prevailing cry which goes up from numbers, bound indissolubly together by the same invisible and invincible chain, the *idem velle*, the *idem nolle*, the *idem sentire de republicâ*, was alone capable of plucking down from the grasp of the ascendancy the rights of an oppressed people. But many days passed before this great work was attempted : it was a strange concurrence of circumstances ; it was almost an accident which suggested it.

The grand defect of all previous efforts had been the constant absence of every arrangement which could embrace the people. The manner

in which the committees had been constituted was indeed popular: the members, as we have seen, were directed to be chosen at meetings of the parishes; but this was a mere dead letter: in general the choice was left to the gentry themselves. The people, beyond their occasional attendance at an aggregate meeting, seemed to take little interest in Catholic affairs. Not indeed that they did not fully feel the grievances which oppressed them, but that they attributed those grievances to an erroneous cause: they did not trace the waters of bitterness to their spring;* they feebly attempted to dam out by local resistance the sweeping tides, and sent them only from their own lands to the lands of their neighbours. The people therefore were in the first instance to be instructed in the true nature and the original causes of their wrong; this instruction was to be judiciously communicated;

* “We cannot lower,” says Malthus, with so much truth and beauty, “the waters of misery, by *pressing them down in different places*, which must necessarily make them rise somewhere else; the only way in which we can hope to effect our purpose is, by *drawing them off*.”—Book iv. c. 5. This is not the political economy of Mr. Sadler or his predecessors. Our whole government of Ireland has been nothing else but the pressing down of these waters in different places: we now, for the first time, think it wiser to draw them off.

and the results brought to bear in mass against the common oppressions of the country. A plan which could fully effect this, and at the same time win back the aristocracy, and reconcile them to the pretensions of their former antagonists, the middle classes of the community, had some chance of finally achieving the emancipation of Ireland. But to conceive such a plan, and still more to reduce it from theory into practice, required a mind of very peculiar temperament. It required the ardour of youth, and the sagacity of age; a nature which could delight in obstacle, which could draw strength from opposition, which could triumph over time, and defy delay. It required a man who, feared if not respected by the aristocracy, applauded by the citizens, should be idolised by the people; a man who could touch with the spell most congenial to each, all those adverse and oftentimes conflicting natures. It required the audacious disdain of secondary considerations, the adventurous spirit of a fanatic, the intrepidity of a successful commander, the deep insight into his materials and resources, of an experienced general. It required a man who could view Irish interests through Ireland, who, essentially Irish himself, knew where the national heart really lay, and could bend or drive it to every pur-

pose ; a man, the reflection of the men on whom he had to act : the representative of their feelings, the organ of their desires, the speaker of their passions, and the reckless flatterer at times of their prejudices, with an eloquence, not of the schools only, but of the fields, not for one class, but for all,—a man doing what he recommended, and completing in the tedious details of the committee, what he had impetuously and often imperiously carried in the debate. Such a man, happily for the freedom and safety of the country, existed ; he had the fortune to conceive, and the resolution to execute : the Catholic Association arose before him.

But the resurrection of this body, which called so soon together, as in the vision of the prophet, the scattered bones of the former association—a body strange, portentous, powerful, with sway which might be turned with the same facility to blessings and to curses, was not so suddenly accomplished. The spirits were indeed called up from the vasty deep ; but they did not so soon obey the bidding when they *were* so called. Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Sheil met by accident in the year 1823 at the house of a common friend in the mountains of Wicklow ; and after mutually lamenting the degraded and torpid state of their Catholic countrymen, agreed to

sign an address, and inclose it without delay to the most influential gentlemen of their body. This was the first foundation of the late Association. The summons was at first treated by some with scorn, with indignation by others, with neglect by all. Men, who a few months after were the most zealous partisans of the new measures, then looked with derision on the fruitless effort, as they deemed it, of an appeal to a people who had testified, in a manner to be mistaken by none but an enthusiast, their perfect indifference to the question. A few newspaper rencontres succeeded : the old war of recrimination recommenced ; it attracted the public attention ; it excited the public feeling : an interest was created, and from that moment every thing was success. The first seeds of the Catholic Association were scarcely perceptible ; ten or twenty individuals met in a retired room at Dempsey's tavern in Sackville Street, and resolved boldly to commence. The nucleus was formed, it increased ; every day presented an accession of new and enthusiastic members. It was thus that the first assemblies of the body had been gathered ; but there was no comparison between the progress of the Associations of 1760 and 1823. The previous history of the body, the experience of past struggle and past

success, gave them courage, and gave them strength. A very perceptible improvement had taken place during the long interval which had elapsed from the decay and final dissolution of the Board. New habits with new facilities of thinking had grown up : the people were ripening fast for the share which they were to bear in the new confederacy. When such a number of individuals, principally residents of Dublin, could be brought together as might justify the assumption of public functions, rules and regulations for the guidance of the body were framed and adopted. They bore little analogy in detail, and not much in spirit, to those which in former periods had been in use. The verdict in the case of Downes precluded all delegation ; all former plans were therefore impracticable : a new principle, that of an open club, without canvas or ballot, the members admissible on the *viva voce* proposition of a friend, and the subscription of one pound, was adopted. The body so constituted soon rose from a small deliberative assembly to a grand confederacy, extending its arms round all Ireland. The objects to be attained, the means to which the projector was limited, the temper of the country, the nature of the struggle upon which they were about to enter, suggested and

justified these very material alterations. The success has fully triumphed over every objection (and in detail there were very many); nor will any one be so unreasonable as fastidiously to reprobate the important advantages of such a political lever, because it may not have been the most perfect which political ingenuity could have devised. On such occasions it is the duty of a good man, and the wisdom of a prudent one, to remember the answer of Solon to the stranger, and to console himself with the reflection, that if not the best which could be imagined, it was the very best which the times and the men with whom he had to deal would allow of.

In the interval between the dissolution of the Board and the revival of the Association, the people had been left to themselves, to their own sense of grievance, and to their own mode of redress. The consequences were such as again and again have followed from the same causes in the history of Irish sufferings. Outrages, excesses of the usual character of crime, desolated the South, and particularly portions of the county Limerick. The county was rich, and the gentry resident; the inhabitants are amongst the poorest and the most oppressed in Ireland. A local tyranny, arising indeed out of the general misrule, produced a local insurrection. It re-

quired the outstretched arm of military law and express penal statute to quell it. The same symptoms of the same malady evinced themselves, with the same virulence, and the same resistance to every attempt at cure, in various other districts. The government had to begin again and again ; the disease was not expelled, but chased only through various parts of the system. The Association first applied a new secret of healing ; that wonderful power of sympathy with the sufferer, of fellow-interest in the grievance, of earnest co-operation in the search after the redress, which raised it into a sort of Areopagus in a few months between governors and governed in Ireland. The outrage and the crime diminished ; the insurrection passed away ; a few words of friendly advice did more than statutes or armies to restore tranquillity.

The Association gained daily in strength : it soon embraced all classes in the roll of its members. The aristocracy had forgotten the feud with the individuals who had originated it : many of them had left the scene, many were preparing to leave it ; a new race, unaffected by their fears or their dislikes, had succeeded them ; and every motive which proud and honourable men could have was ready to impel them forward. Lord Killeen, the son of the Earl of Fingal, appeared

at the meetings, and brought with him the accession of high rank, sound views, and a lofty spirit of independence, not very usual amongst the Catholic peerage. He was followed by Lord Gormanstown, premier viscount, who, sacrificing his early prepossessions against the manner in which the cause had hitherto been conducted, consented to give every co-operation to the exertions and principles of Mr. O'Connell. Lord Kenmare, unwilling or unable to appear personally, contributed to the same measures the sanction of his purse and name. Behind them came the almost entire body of the gentry, and deposed on the altar of the public good every recollection of their ancient differences. The clergy too had sent in from time to time their adhesion : Maynooth began to be felt ; Irishmen who had never left Ireland were the priests, whom it sent forth ; and though in some instances the proprieties and decencies of their ecclesiastical station considerably lost, the country gained on the whole by the infusion of a more popular spirit amongst the body. They had long felt that they were far more dependant on their flocks than their flocks were upon them ; and though in the outset of a popular movement they were enabled to control, the decision once taken, they often had no choice

but to follow. The recruits therefore, from the second order of the clergy, were numerous beyond precedent; and in proportion as they attached themselves to the new Association, they advocated its principles and executed its measures, not merely with the fidelity of a tried friend, but with the zeal and enthusiasm of a proselyte.

It was now time to invite the people to a fuller participation in their own affairs. The county and parish meetings had done little: they had been summoned at long intervals, with great difficulty, and terminated with resolutions in no connexion with each other, and of little consequence in the result. Whenever indeed a real effort was made, the effort was successful; where the hand touched, the spark was emitted; but there was no charging of the whole machine; the mass of the country was chill and dead. An admirable expedient soon offered itself—suggested indeed, like the Association itself, by former experiment and success. The contributions of the one-pound subscribers were sufficient for the ordinary purposes of petition, &c.; but the views of the Association enlarged with the enlargement of the body itself. Attack was varied, was multiplied, on every point of the enemy's camp. Every collateral topic (and

midst numberless aberrations from sound policy and good sense there was much wisdom in such discussions) was suddenly taken up. The feeling of the people was awakened. They saw, in their own words, "that something was to be done for *them* also." It was not a cold question of distant and doubtful advantage; the readmission of the peerage or the gentry to the privileges of their order; the extension of legal honours and emoluments to the Catholic barrister: but it was the strong and home assurance which every peasant soon had of instant protection against local wrong, the redress of the law against the law, the assisting hand in distress from a body in which he found the interpreter of his own sufferings, and the conviction that whilst others still sought their emancipation, his emancipation had already begun. Every complaint was listened to; every injury was inquired into; protection was promised, and the promises made good with a precision and promptitude which they failed not to contrast with the slovenly and reluctant justice of his Majesty. The decision of the bench was almost second to the debate of the Association; the village magistrate detested but feared it; the village peasant appealed to it, and obeyed it. A fourth estate rose up in the kingdom, as powerful in

many instances as the other three.* This confidence once given, every thing else was easy ;

* See the very remarkable admissions from all parties, of this extensive and singular influence, in the Report of the Inquiry into the State of Ireland ; particularly the evidence of the Rev. Henry Cooke, a Presbyterian minister ; I. Godley, Esq. ; Major Warburton, a police magistrate, &c. "I think," says Major Warburton, "in one of my letters I stated distinctly, that I did not conceive *any system of government* could be more *complete* in carrying on communication from heads to inferiors ; I thought it a most complete organization for that purpose." In another portion of his evidence he observes, "that the Catholic Association had produced *a union* more than any other event in Catholic affairs ; that this union had been materially increased by the *rent*," &c. He then notices the principle and influence of this union upon the various classes of which the Catholic body was composed. "The *Catholic Association produced the tranquillity of the country in combination with the clergy* : it was done for a purpose in order to show *they had influence* ; that is, the value of the Catholic Association, and the power of the priesthood. The Catholic Association gave the priests a much *greater* control than they *otherwise* possessed ;—the *people were aware they were in communication with the Association*." This union, "the perfection and extent of this organization," he considered "as one of the chief causes of the danger to be apprehended from the Catholic Association." Mr. Godley goes higher, and touches on the causes which produced both. "The Catholic Association and the Catholic clergy can at any time agitate the popular mind, when they have a *good cause*, and are *discontented* ; they are discontented under the *present laws*,

for "the Irish are indeed a tractable nation, and though they have often resisted chains of iron, they may easily be conducted by a kindly hand with a silken thread." It was necessary to support these efforts for their liberation: the people knew it, and came forward spontaneously with their offerings. The moment was propi-

and *ignorance* and *poverty* are assistants. The causes are, distinctions in the law: no Catholic Association could have existed unless such *distinctions* existed *previously*." Mr. Cooke dwells upon the *dangers* resulting from this influence, and suggests the means of neutralising and *extinguishing* it. "There is a class," says he, "in Ireland who, seeing the misery of the country, wish to reform it. They consider the people as so much water converted into steam in a steam-boiler; and such a body as the Catholic Association as persons keeping up the fire; they consider them as aided in the work by the priests, and they view the whole of the machinery as returning an abundant revenue into the hands of those who take the trouble of working it. I think men who take these views consider that a limited admission into office of the leading Catholics would be a kind of safety-valve to this boiler," (why not destroy it altogether by the admission of all?) "by means of which it would be deprived of the power of creating an explosion, while its real beneficial energies might be employed to the benefit of the state." The short analysis of all this is—The state of the laws created discontent—discontent, the Association—the Association, union—union, power—power, danger—and danger may end in civil war. The remedy is simple: take away the basis, and the whole superstructure falls.

tious—it was seized. The contribution of a penny per month was proposed by Mr. O'Connell : it was instantly adopted ; every man hurried to cast his mite into the treasury of a body, from which he felt assured it would return to him in tenfold good. Every peasant in Ireland, every Catholic inhabitant, from the child of seven to the grandfather of seventy, was invited to contribute ; and thus arose in a few weeks “ the *Catholic Rent*.”

The name was strange ; the collection at first awkward and ill-organised : the amount fell far below the calculations of the proposers ; but the great point was the principle, and that was fully discovered. The contribution was for *palpable* and *direct* purposes, purposes intelligible to and felt by the entire people : the connexion between the *tax* and the *benefit* was understood ; it was not levied, but offered ; it was voluntary, and not forced. It increased singularly the momentum of that impetus which the Association had now communicated to the entire body. It was not only that positive suffering was removed or that Catholic power was augmented by so large an accession of its funds ; a new means of binding the people in an open and visible fraternity, which extended from one end of Ireland to the other, was obtained. Every farthing paid

added a link to the chain ; the contributors were the creditors, and the creditors were necessarily the partisans of the Association. Every where “the *Rent*” raised a subsidiary association. The “Rent collection” soon settled into a system ; the collectors became the disciplined, as the Rent contributors were the irregular, troops of the Association.* A spirit of keen inquiry, of

* The Rent was first organised in the towns ; it then spread, though slowly, to the neighbouring parishes ; and from thence, by degrees, to the most remote parts of the country. The Collectors at first volunteered ;—formed a committee ;—divided the town into walks for collection—and transmitted their funds, through their secretary, to the Association. As they increased, and improved their system, they enlarged considerably its objects. They took rooms,—held their meetings weekly,—not only received reports of rent and remittances to the Association, &c. ; but discussed every subject of public policy connected with the general question ; and, in most particulars, exhibited a close analogy to the great body with whom they were in relation. In the towns, the consequences were very conspicuous. The Rent proceeded rapidly ; and with it a corresponding passion for political discussion, which pervaded every body and every class of society. The various dinners of charitable societies, trades, &c. soon were made vehicles of this universal passion. It penetrated :—it clung to every thing. The most indifferent action took its colour from the one principle : the most casual conversation invariably terminated in the Catholic question. But the county parishes continued more or less inert. Up to the very eve of the dissolution, the towns

just observation, of untiring watchfulness, was suddenly evoked. There came upon the popular mind a new, a powerful appetite at once. The

generally furnished in a double proportion to the counties. Various alterations and improvements were adopted ;—none with sufficient effect. The Provincial meetings appointed an Inspector, who was empowered to appoint in his turn five Assistants in each county ; each of these Assistants was then required to furnish monthly reports of the state of Rent in his respective district. But the Inspectors either neglected appointing the Assistants, or the Assistants refused to do their duty. Then came the Churchwardens, who certainly very considerably ameliorated the system, and added a new impetus to the collection. But the defects were not yet got rid of. A third mode was finally suggested by Mr. O'Connell far more effective, as far as the augmentation of the public funds was in question, than any of the preceding. He proposed that a Sunday should be set apart in the year, to be called the "Rent Sunday," for the express and sole purpose of this collection. The collection was to be made at the chapel-door ; and the majority of the parish priests, with whose dues it interfered, would, it was hoped, be prevailed on to give their assent. This expedient, however, independent of the encroachment just noticed (for virtually it would have been the contribution of the parish priests), was liable to numerous objections. The chief object of the original measure would have been defeated. It was the day-by-day contribution which made it valuable. The Catholic peasant was taught by it to think *daily* on his grievances. The effect would have been very different had he only been reminded of them once a year. See *Appendix*.

Association engrossed the attention of multitudes. Its proceedings became elevated by the consciousness of its position. It guided the people, and thus raised itself in raising the people. In the short space of two years, what had long defied the anxious exertions of all preceding bodies, was tranquilly accomplished. The "three hands," the three classes, were joined in one. The penal statute was the *force* which clasped them. The entire country formed but one association.

It is difficult to paint to a stranger, it is unnecessary to paint to a witness, the spirit of extraordinary enthusiasm which burst forth at that period throughout all Ireland. It was the beginning of a totally new order of things. The right path to emancipation was discerned. Every one went down zealously and fearlessly into it ; they girt themselves up to the work with the most solemn and cheering convictions in their hearts. The days of 1782 seemed returning with a brighter radiance on the nation ; but wiser far than the volunteers, their descendants determined to retrieve the errors of their fathers, and to emancipate, not by halves, but totally and permanently, and for all the people.

This singular state of things had now lasted for two years, under the very eyes of that same

government which had fondly imagined to scatter the body into its original fragments by the unadvised proclamation of its Irish secretary. But a wiser and more amicable feeling had succeeded to the "*Thorough*" system* of their predecessors, and a rational apprehension of inevitable consequences, acting with more energy than the naked love of justice, disposed the legislature to a more patient and practical view of their claims. But the habit of considering the question, from the first discussion in the Imperial Parliament in 1805, in connexion with what were so inaptly termed Securities, rendered almost hopeless the introduction of any bill which would go to the whole length of removing remaining disqualifications, without some offer on the part of the Catholics of an equivalent. Preliminary and collateral measures were proposed. The Association *in limine*, either as a precautionary

* "The cure under God," says Strafford, (*Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 136.) "must be wrought by *one* Esculapius alone; and that, in my weak judgment, is to be effected rather by *corrosives* than *lenitives*: less than *Thorough* will not overcome it; there is a cancerous malignity in it which must be cut forth, which long since rejected all other means; and therefore to God and him I leave it." This is as good Brunswickism, almost, as any lately published by the Robinsons, the Horners, &c.

arrangement, or as a sacrifice to the offended majesty of Protestant England, was instantly to be suppressed. This done, the two powers, Protestant and Catholic, could meet (it was suggested) on similar, though by no means on equal terms. The Securities were next debated: the Veto (as a satisfactory adjustment was the avowed object of the bill) was of course out of the question. The religious as well as civil interests of the Irish had been too deeply engaged against it. It had been the cause of a feud which had split the entire body. No arrangement connected with such a security could therefore be adopted without exciting the utmost discontent. It would be virtually conceding to one portion of the Catholics a triumph over the other, and thus leaving in existence the seeds of those very divisions which it was professedly its object to suppress. Other arrangements somewhat less objectionable, though scarcely more effectual, were devised. The Catholic clergy were to be paid by the state.* The forty-shilling free-

* That the clergy will be ultimately *pensioned*, is by no means improbable; but there are two great difficulties to contend with: one, the apprehension of recognising a Catholic church in connexion with a Protestant state: the other, the precedent it might be supposed to establish in favour of all other classes of dissenters. The position of the Catholic

holders were to be disfranchised.* The first idea of these two measures was suggested by

clergyman, in the mean time, must every day become more and more difficult. The Catholic, when *free*, will not pay both churches with cheerfulness; and the first indication of such a feeling will probably fall upon his own. If pensioned, I know not whether his position will not be still worse. A host of Catholic Methodists, in the shape of friars, &c. will soon rise up behind him. Men who live easily, gradually settle into comfort, and from comfort into indolence. Comparisons would soon be made, and to the disadvantage of the rich or pensioned clergy, and in favour of the poor. The pensioned clergy would be called, and in time might deserve to be called, the drones—the unpensioned, the bees. The passion for stimulants, for more fervour, more enthusiasm, more fanaticism, would continue. This passion would be cheaply and largely gratified. It would terminate as it has done in England: there would be two clergies—the clergy of the conventicle, and the clergy of the chapel of ease; the clergy of the rich, and the clergy of the poor.

* The forty-shilling freeholder of the year 1825 was not the forty-shilling freeholder of the year 1829. A moral revolt (I am afraid it can scarcely be called a moral revolution) has taken place. In the absence of the stimulant, is it probable the excitation will continue? and if not, to whom is the freeholder ultimately to revert? But this is not the place to argue the question. The forty-shilling freeholder of that day had evinced little claims to consideration. He had continued the serf which the bill of 1793 had found him. The gift then given by the ascendancy was conferred, like the shirt of Nessus, for injury and not for good. It was intended to consolidate more efficiently a power which had

the late inquiry into the state of Ireland ; and as far as the evidence of the most opposite classes,

been founded on the depression of the people,—a power the ascendancy had reason to think lasting, for it had now endured for nearly two centuries. The Catholic strength lay in the independence and energy of the middle classes. The ascendancy knew it: they tried to extinguish their voices in the crowd and clamour of dependents. But the Catholics (it has often been observed) petitioned as anxiously for the same boon. Were they ignorant of their own interests? or which of the two was in the right? Events, it is to be hoped, will yet solve the question; but, in the interval, it may be observed, that legislation, which grounds itself on present considerations only, is childish or pernicious, or both. Men alter every day. Room must be left for the growth of a nation: but for a nation which, from the very circumstance of its being so long stunted, is now likely to spring up to its natural stature, with tenfold rapidity and vigour, the largest room should be allowed. Instead of taking away the franchise because the holder is now unworthy, it would seem a more rational and kindlier mode of legislation, to do every thing first in one's power to make the holder worthy of the franchise. This will take time, no doubt, and patience,—much time and much patience; but had the same reasoning prevailed in other cases, where would our liberties be now? No lesson is like practice—no man can ever be free, unless he be entrusted with the exercise of freedom. The more frequent and the more constant this exercise is, the more chance of his making a proficiency in the glorious art. It is not now, when every exertion is making to extend the right of election in one country, that we should attempt to restrict it in the other;—it is not well that what we give

opinions, professions, and characters, concurring with few exceptions in the same conclusions, could be considered as a justifying motive for such important alterations, little doubt can exist that the anxious advocates for relief had very tolerable warranty for the support which they then gave them. But there is a material difference between the advocacy of a minister and the advocacy of an opposition. The Relief bill was thrown out in the Lords; the collateral measures failed with the principal, and, as unnecessary lumber, were cast into the same heap. But the preliminary measure had already passed: the Catholic Association (as far as a statute could effect it) was actually suppressed; and a discussion, which had raised the Catholic mind to a

with the right hand, we should take back with the left. But these considerations are perfectly distinct from inquiry into and correction of abuses. Many and great exist. The pruning knife is every where required. It cannot be applied too generally, or too soon. But let us legislate in such matters not for purposes of sacrifice or concession, but for purposes of reform. From legislation in such a spirit some good might proceed, and the good would probably endure. From the present bill we can expect nothing but the consequences of a hasty barter. As to the opinions or speeches on either side, they are, under the circumstances, of no value. No one can be so blind as not to see for what persons and for what ends they were made.

sudden pitch of exultation — which showed already extended below them the land of promise—which had already placed them in the very reach of their wishes, terminated abruptly not only in disappointment, not only in rejection, not only in peremptory and contumacious refusal of all relaxation, but in adding a new penal law to the old grievance code, and diminishing the means by which its abolition was finally to be accomplished.

CHAP. VIII.

Disappointment and indignation of the Catholics—Public meetings—The Algerine act evaded—The Association, with a slight change of name, continues its sittings—Government declines to interfere—Principle of this forbearance—Advantages resulting from the attempted suppression—Fourteen days' meeting—Provincial meetings—Census of the Catholic population—Important and extensive influence of these measures on the aristocracy, the clergy, and the people—General union and consolidation of Catholic opinion and Catholic strength—General Election of 1826—Election of Waterford—of Louth—of Cavan, &c.—Remarkable effect upon Catholics and Protestants—Simultaneous meetings—Petition to Parliament—Rejection of the petition.

THE indignation of the Catholics at this result was extreme. They attributed it to the worst of treasons; and, galled by the sense of having been duped as well as injured, poured forth, with a blind and unmeasured license, their vituperation on the authors and supporters of the obnoxious measure. The sharers even in the rejected bills were not spared. The People saw in every thing connected with these proceedings a portion only of the oppressive plot into which

they had so unworthily been betrayed. The "Algerine Act" (an epithet perhaps more emphatic than appropriate) was contemptuously applied to the Suppression bill, and the designation soon became the opprobrious synonyme of every thing most hostile to the rights and interests of Catholic Ireland. All who attempted to palliate the proposed alterations were fiercely denounced; they were regarded with the suspicious eye of abused confidence, and shunned, like the Vetoists who had preceded them, in all the political transactions of the body, as the dupes or tools of a deceitful and implacable faction. The meetings which followed throughout all Ireland, were strongly characteristic of this highly-inflamed state of the public feeling. Even the popularity of recognised leadership was obscured by its breath; and it was not until the most ample abjuration had been made by Mr. O'Connell, in atonement for his presumed share in the conspiracy, that he was allowed to resume his former ascendancy over the body. In all this a great deal of the sincere spirit of public virtue unquestionably mingled, and the people exercised nothing more than their undoubted right in appealing against their disfranchisement. The clergy naturally felt objections to the acceptance of a bounty for the performance of

Catholic duties from a Protestant church: but it would have been well also, had they begotten somewhat more of temperance in the whirlwind of their indignation, and recollected, that not only was it possible that such sacrifices had been made with pure intentions, but that they themselves had been virtual parties by their silence and acquiescence to every condition of either bill. They had been intended as peace-offerings for a great good; had the price been faithfully paid, nothing more would probably have been said of the barter. It was the failure of the negotiation which threw a slur on the negotiators. Emancipation would have redeemed a host of errors and sins. A liberated nation thinks only of enjoying—it is late before it inquires into the mode of its liberation.*

* The theory has been proved by facts. All opposition to the Disfranchising bill has failed. The country has not been taken by ignorance or by surprise. The experience of Waterford, Louth, and Clare, was before them. Their leaders have summoned—have protested—have petitioned; and have summoned, protested, and petitioned, in vain. With the opportunity offered them they have remained silent—acquiescent; and in some instances, they have approved. What is the cause of this phenomenon?—Has the franchise become a burden? Does the freeholder apprehend he shall be called on again for so perilous an assertion of his right of choice—(doubly perilous without an

Let it not be supposed, however, that this is to stand as a justification of the manner in which these matters were conducted. The nation relied far too implicitly on the discretion of individuals. These individuals in their turn relied far too implicitly on their influence over the nation. The letters which were then received from the heads of the deputation in London demanded unlimited confidence and tranquillity on the part of the Catholics: the obnoxious measures, as in the instance of the Veto, were concealed until they were actually before parliament. This might have been good policy in a minister of the crown, but it was not very popular or very just in a leader of the people.

But the evil which had been done was still to be repaired; and it was not by recriminations amongst fellow-labourers in the same cause, nor by quarrels between fellow-captives in the same dungeon, that they could finally hope to burst their prison door, and approve themselves worthy of their liberation. They still exclaimed against the deputation; they still rejected all

Association to protect him)? or does he believe that he must revert as of old to the landed aristocrat, and is careless of a privilege, which the nature of Irish property must for a long time continue to convert, more or less, into the disgraceful duties of a serf or a slave?

apology; they still deemed error in a leader (and with some reason) as much a crime as corruption or deceit. But their indignation was soon gratified by this ebullition, and the anger passed away; they soon returned in the sorrowful sobriety of oppressed men, to rid themselves of this new burden. An act of parliament, however subtle, is but a feeble barrier against the subtlety of a sufferer. The statute was examined in its various bearings: it presented numerous absurdities, numerous incoherencies, numerous omissions. Much more precise legislation under the old code had been gradually and silently undermined or swept away. The Algerine act was vague: it seemed intended only as a *pro forma* measure; it was calculated not for operation but display: by the help of a few technicalities it was rendered a dead letter, like so many of its predecessors; people laughed at the flaxen bonds which had been employed to bind them, changed the name of the Association, kept within the strict limits of the law, talked a little about education, &c. and continued their meetings precisely as before. All this was sufficiently disgraceful to the existing government; it showed the nation that ministers could not devise sufficient means, or had not sufficient courage to employ them if devised,

for the purpose of putting down the Association; it implied ignorance, or timidity, or insincerity, or infirmity of purpose. The latter was probably the true case: the bill of Relief and Grace had been rejected, and they did not like to insist on a bill of Penalties and Pains. The Association not only went on with the same confidence in its intrinsic strength as before, but borrowed from the late attempt a new proof that nothing could extinguish it but justice or brute force. They measured their resources with a far cooler judgment than their antagonists: they profited by every mistake; they grew strong by every blow. They attacked the monopoly, but respected the law—dashed the coarse weapon of physical resistance from the hand of the people, but gave them the staff and guide of moral influence instead. The very errors of their opponents were treasured up, and turned in due season to account. The Suppression bill limited the meetings of the old Association for the purpose of petitioning to fourteen days. The object was to restrict—it enlarged: a Fourteen days' meeting was instantly proposed. It brought together what had not been accomplished by all the former weekly meetings in the metropolis. A large concourse of gentlemen and clergy flocked in from the country, and thus superadded a new assembly, in the character of a convention, to

the ordinary meetings of the Association. The rights of Protestant and miscellaneous societies had been respected by the act ; education and other associations had been spared. In Ireland Catholic grievance was a Proteus ; it took the shape of education, charity, agriculture, commerce, amusement ; whatever was Irish was more or less Catholic, more or less Protestant ; whatever was social or civil was more or less infected by the sour taint of the general oppression.* Under this masked battery, then, of education, charity, &c. with the all-saving clause “ for all purposes not prohibited by law ” in front, every shaft was levelled, and every complaint uttered, which could have been permitted in the open field of the old Association. There

* A French gentleman on a visit to Ireland observed with some truth, “ Il y a en chaque salon deux partis : un parti droit et un parti gauche ; une quadrille pour, et une quadrille contre.” But it was not often that the opposing quadrilles could so closely approach each other. Society lately in Ireland was based, like Mr. Sadler’s English constitution, on “ the social and free ” principle of exclusion. Balls, dinners, dances, and dresses, like bridges and hotels, and for aught I know rivers, were divided into Popish or Protestant. Lord Mount Cashel very lately requested the interference of His Majesty’s Home Secretary to prevent a “ Popish bridge ” being erected at Youghall. Is his Lordship’s idea of a Protestant constitution at all analogous to his idea of a Popish bridge ?

was another object still in view, rendered now more necessary by the late disappointment. The very disposition to fall back, noticed in a former part of this sketch as the prominent defect in the Irish character, required a commensurate effort to sustain to its level the original excitation. Every expedient was to be attempted ; next to disunion, nothing could prove so fatal to such a cause as indifference. Indifference in politics as in love, is far more insurmountable than decided hostility. An enemy is nearer to conversion than a neutral. This was the secret, and as events have proved, this was also the wisdom of constant agitation. The ferment was to be rendered regular, the tumult habitual : it was to be always on the increase ; always susceptible of higher pressure ; always menacing more ; always in appearance at a crisis, but with a still stronger crisis behind it. Events and men well fitted for such purposes presented themselves every day ; the *fremebunda quies* was studied, was taught, was perfectly well understood. Agitation was gradually organised. The limitation of their Association meetings to fourteen days seemed to restrict the rights of discussion and petition, though, practically considered, it very much improved and enlarged them. This plea or pretext was

instantly seized for the purposes of additional agitation. It was made good ground for the convening of a new species of assembly, the Provincial Meetings. Each province of Ireland was summoned by requisition; the Catholics invited their Protestant friends; both met on an appointed day, in a town chosen in rotation, in one or other of the counties of the province. They generally remained sitting for two days, and dined together on the second or the third. The result was most important. It was not only another convention, like that of the Fourteen days' meeting, but it was a convention of Catholics and Protestants.* It familiarised both sects with each other. It brought together two qualities of intellect and feeling, both diverse, but both admirably well suited to their respective positions. It gave an opportunity to every man of knowing his neighbour: it inspired mutual confidence and mutual respect. The people also incalculably benefited. It was not only a spectacle of great and stirring interest (and

* All sects indeed were indiscriminately admissible to the Catholic Association; and this constituted a very striking difference between it and all the former committees, &c. &c. of the body. But little advantage was taken of this permission for a considerable period. Few or no Protestants at first attended.

the Irish possess to a remarkable degree this southern distinctive, a passion for show and public display), but it was really a series of impressive political lectures on their grievances and their rights, which left behind them thoughts which burnt for many months afterwards in the hearts of the peasantry, gave them a visible and sensible connexion with the leading class of their countrymen, and taught them, that upon the co-operation and union of all orders depended mainly the chance which all orders might have of a future restoration to their rights.

The Provincial meeting thus travelled round the entire province in four or five years, and each town and each succeeding year vied in the numbers it could assemble, in the magnificence of its preparations, in the boldness of its resolutions, in the spirit which it generated, with its predecessors. Men whose names had long been familiar through the public prints to the ear of their fellow-countrymen thus became personally known one after the other to them all; the leaders grew really such; and the Association, viewed through such a medium, had an influence (what power is stronger than such an influence?) scarcely equalled by the government itself. Another benefit still more conspicuous immediately resulted from these assemblages:

the clergy of the entire neighbourhood assisted : the people saw with their own eyes a junction, which made little impression as long as it was casual or distant ; they saw the priest honoured by and honouring the layman ; they saw him seated on the same bench, supporting the same propositions, expressing the same sentiments, concurring in the same appeal, and invoking in the same tone the same spirit of constitutional regeneration. The lesson of Christian liberality—of charity to all men—of order—of tranquillity—of unabating obedience, in the midst of provocation to the guardian genius of the laws, had been preached in public and in private by the Association ; but the eloquence of the demagogue came mended from the tongue of the ecclesiastic, and fell with a more persuasive force upon the willing attention of the people. A sort of religious sanction was thus communicated imperceptibly to a cause, which to those not immediately engaged in its promotion appeared purely and altogether political : the very principle upon which the exclusion had originally been founded was religious : the persecution was religious ; and the late crude efforts at proselytism by the opposite church had enhanced not a little this conviction in the mind of a large mass of the population, that the whole struggle

was religious. But the general abstinence of the Catholic clergy from all political deliberations of a public nature had hitherto very much neutralised the force of such feelings. A great many of the clergy still retained the indistinct and shadowy recollection rather than the body and reality of their former fears ; and affected too by a sense of the decencies of their order, and thinking that the still small voice of reason, and the slow dropping of the stream of time, were better calculated to win the reluctant and to wear away the obstinate, than the broad and bold complaint and the hurried march of assembled multitudes, very constantly refused every inducement to add their voices to the voices of the people. The Catholic Rent in the first instance, the Provincial meetings in the second, roused them from this apathy. But both these measures, it must also be observed, fell upon dispositions which had been already prepared. The Catholic priesthood had not been allowed to indulge in quiet their habitual tendencies. They had long been accustomed to the cruel invective and the ribbald taunt of their political oppressors, and had retired further within the sanctuary to avoid as much as possible a collision, in which even a victory would have been a disgrace. But a new species of warfare had just

commenced, in which, omitting all personal attack on the individual, and softening down the sectarian hostility against a rival creed with the specious name of universal charity, the weapon was directed against the religion and not against its professors, and the triumph was sought not over the priesthood but over the church. In a word, the New Reformation put forth its quack pretensions, and promised to protestantise Ireland, and render emancipation superfluous in the space of a few years.* The labourers in this vineyard began valiantly, but threw aside their spades before noon. There is no short way to the mind of a nation ; and they quickly found that it was easier to invent a new name than to change an old creed. The bubble burst ; the joint-stock company dispersed ; the defaulters escaped : saintship fell to a grievous discount : a few sufferers railed and wept at the swindling transaction ; and the rest of the nation who had avoided the scrape, shook their heads and laughed openly at the imposture. Such was, *sans phrase*, the “right merrie and conceited adventure” of these spiritual Quixotes, — but its influence (an influence they had little calculated on) remained behind. The first chal-

* See Lord Roden’s speech in the Lords, 1828.

lenges and the first insults to the Catholic clergy were not heard, or if heard were not regarded; they were renewed; the pertinacity attracted notice, the importunity succeeded: the gauntlet was at length taken up, and both parties closed. A new and somewhat fantastic spirit of polemical chivalry then burst up in the country; every dogma was made good plea for battle; every meeting was converted into a joust; every paper opened lists for the combatants. The dragon teeth of controversy seemed to have been sown every where; disputants rushed up on every side like armed men. The immediate consequences of these encounters were perhaps injurious, and certainly disagreeable; but they left behind them some salutary fruits. The Catholic clergy had been roused to a spirit of combination by the necessities of self-defence. Their repugnance to public exhibition was overcome; they stepped out beyond the modesty of their habitual functions into the activity of public life; they began to feel the usual excitements of such scenes, to acknowledge the *gaudia certaminis* of such a warfare: the church became gradually militant, and the weak inventions of the enemy recoiled in front and in flank upon themselves. The priesthood no longer refused co-operation in every expedient of constitutional annoyance;

they seized with alacrity every opportunity of legitimate attack : they joined every meeting, they seconded every proposition, they lent their aid to the execution of every project, which the laity had judged at all likely to gall or defeat their common foe. In the organised power of the Association they already saw a tower of strength, a citadel of defence ; they flocked in under its protection from every side, and lent in return for its cordial support, wherever they were scattered through the country, the earnest contribution of their local influence and power. Another circumstance connected with the preceding, came in aid of the revolution which has just been described. The miracles of the itinerant apostles of the New Reformation were not very numerous ; the conversions were momentary ; the relapses frequent, absolute, and sudden. A more systematic, blockade kind of warfare, co-operating with these light Cossack incursions, was found to be requisite. A mitigated charter-school sort of education, under the patronage of the Kildare Place Society, was planned ; but the first steps of this charitable body were of a very different description indeed from the hot and irregular skirmishing of the New Reformers. They were as meek as doves, and as prudent as serpents. They

did not denounce, they only condemned ; they did not force, they merely seduced. Their schools were opened with the large and liberal generosity of universal Christians ; the cornucopia of literary instruction was poured out with a benignant and equal hand ; they professed to come as the announcers of good tidings unto all men : they professed to be neither Protestants nor Catholics, but Irishmen : they professed to teach, not sectarianism, but morality ; and they invited their fellow-citizens of every denomination to come and receive wisdom from their lips, for the happiness and salvation of their common country. Such appeals have seldom failed in Ireland : there is a slattern good-nature about the Irish character, which predisposes them to embrace first and to examine afterwards. Catholics for a moment joined with Protestants : new fraternizations, as singular as those of the French revolutionists, took place every day ; persons every way the most opposite in their opinions and character were seen ludicrously jostling each other in their hurry to the good work : men who had never met before, and are not likely so soon to meet again, were found seated at the same committee board, devising sublime changes, organising magnificent revolutions, for the instantaneous getting up of a new manufac-

ture of intellect in the country. Purses were opened, schools grew from every heath, Lady Bountifuls swarmed in every village, and a new era of whitewashing and plenty, of primer-reading and bread-eating, seemed already to have dawned. But the plot at last exploded, and the Catholic found how much he had been made an instrument in the hands of a wily foe. The schools they had set up in many places were imperceptibly converted into sectarian decoys, and the introduction of "the Bible without note or comment" amongst them, was the overt announcement of the long-matured plan. The priests took the alarm, and a new crusade instantly commenced. A person coming at that moment into the country would have been alternately grieved and amused by the tragi-comic conflict. A flock was dragged one way and then dragged another, into this fold and then into that: education was set up against education, school against school, teacher against teacher; and the whole intellect of the country was made the prize for contending hosts. The war raged long and loudly, and in some places the spiritual brought the fleshly arm to its aid. Teachers were sometimes burnt out of their schools by nightly marauders; flourishing Kildare Place colonies were in a moment annihi-

lated by a single anathema from the Popish altar : every man took part in the insurrection ; children were withdrawn from the hostile establishments, and were forced by their parents to give up their reading and writing, rather than run the risk of reading or writing " in the wrong way." * Yet all this was of the greatest

* The reading of the Bible (the Revelations for instance, or the Song of Solomon) may be intelligible and edifying to every class of readers ; or it may not. But that is not the question. The point to which the Irish objected was, the being forced or mystified into this sort of lecture. This was mere human nature. The Sabbatarians resisted the " Book of Sports," which commanded them to amuse themselves, with as much pertinacity as if it had been a penal statute. " It was sport for them to refrain from sport," says the historian, " for mankind love sport as little as prayer by compulsion."—But thus it was : the best measures, in the diseased state of Irish politics, very often became the worst ; whatever was poured into that poisoned chalice soured instantly into poison. The Catholic reasoned naturally if not justly ; he could not conceive it possible, that the same men who were so anxious to exclude him from all enjoyment of the rights of a citizen, could really feel much anxiety about his education or his soul. They came with bad credentials before him ; they spoke in the morning of " persuasion," and " their poor countrymen," and " the true way," and of " education," and " the Bible," as the only remedies for the evils of Ireland ; and at their Orange orgies at night they admitted that they had had no other means of persuasion than exclusion ; no other remedy

utility. It created rivalry; it broke up the coarse clods; it turned the fallow soil into cultivation; and made the ignorant and the idle for once look home. The priest saw that he lived in a day when instruction could not be refused; the only point with him was, how it should be best given, and in his own defence he established Catholic schools. The cause of education became identified with the cause of emancipation. It formed a principal object in the collection of "the Rent." A benefit so tangible, so immediate, instantly kindled corresponding exertion. In many parishes the priest, however reluctant he was supposed to be to sanction any division of the religious charities of his parishioners, was frequently found to be the most earnest in contributing to the Association fund. He regarded it as a treasury for the promoting the local as well as public advantage of the body, and expected to see it return in its due season in the building of his school or the

for these evils than the true Protestant remedy of their forefathers, the "*Jubes eum saignereri atque resaigneri*" of Moliere. Thus the Spaniards preached the love of their neighbours to the Indians:—are we to be surprised that the Catholics answered them like the Indians, and that such preachers with such an audience should have toiled in vain?

repairs of his ruined church. He thus became *personally* and *constantly* interested in the voluntary levy, and once adopting with this tender of his purse the politics and views of the Association, grew a champion in its cause, a zealous preacher of its opinions, an extender of its organization, and in time the principal channel by which its influences were communicated to the remotest parts of the land.

It cannot be denied that the priesthood, though they may have lost in some particulars, in others gained materially by this active union. The doctrines of passive obedience, once so popular in the Irish Catholic church,* and in so

* Religious Toryism, if so it may be called, is the taint of almost all churches. Misfortune did not eradicate it from the Catholic church of Ireland. The frequent necessity of propitiating the reigning power with the phrases of slavery, made the persons who employed them at last slaves. Add to this—the spirit of Stuart partisanship, to which the Irish Catholic was compelled, gave new value to these Stuart doctrines. They made by necessity first a part of their practice; then a part of their political creed. But the church of England had not the same apology for an almost equal degree of servility. The bishops in the reign of James I. and Charles I. studiously inculcated the doctrine, “that resistance to the commands of rulers in *every conceivable* instance is a heinous *sin*.” This doctrine is laid down in the homily against “Wilful Disobedience and Rebellion.” In another “On Obedience,” the same duty of

many other churches on the continent, have altogether disappeared from the political creed of the modern ecclesiastic. No disciple of Locke or Blackstone can now speak with more fervent conviction of the great principles of civil and religious freedom than the Irish Catholic priest.* A revolution, not less miraculous than

nonresistance, even in defence of *religion*, is very shamelessly maintained. In the reign of Charles I. Mainwaring and Sibthorpe openly asserted, "that the king might take the subject's money at *his pleasure*, and that no one might refuse his demand on penalty of *damnation*." "Parliaments," says Mainwaring more distinctly, "were not ordained to contribute any right to the king, but for the more equal imposing and the more easy exacting of that which unto *kings doth appertain* by *natural* and *original* law and justice, as their proper inheritance annexed to their imperial crowns from their birth." All this "loathsome divinity" was indeed the creation of abject men and perilous circumstances; but it was not confined to the Williams, and Neiles, and other sycophants of Buckingham. It became ingrained into the political faith of the Established church (see the disgraceful declaration of Oxford), until the aggressions of a Popish king suggested a new theory: then the practice varied from the doctrine; and as in the late instance of the Catholic priesthood against all the "laws of the schools," human nature reasserted its right.

* Contrast the high constitutional principles of Dr. Doyle with the high Tory principles of Dr. D'Anglade and Dr. De la Hogue. They were the passive obedience men, the Sibthorpes and Mainwarings of Maynooth.

that which occurred amongst the peasantry, spread upwards through every order of the clergy. The rights of conscience were solemnly placed beyond all human interference in his new profession of faith: the sanguinary usurpations of inquisitorial power, under whatever form they had appeared, were anathematised: the encroachments of the spiritual power on the civil, were not less reprobated than the encroachments of the civil on the spiritual: the just limits of both prerogatives were defined; the duties of constitutional opposition to oppression were inculcated: the priest felt the citizen growing up within him, and cast off altogether the habitual stoop which had so long been the disgraceful distinctive of his order: he mingled in the communion of his brother men like a man; felt as indignantly and spoke as proudly of his sufferings and his rights as any other Roman citizen. The time was thoroughly gone by when silence was loyalty, and courtesy public virtue.* Men could not be silent in

* “If a man will make courtesy and say nothing, he is virtuous.”—*Shakspeare, Hen. IV.* The negro slaves of some of the Spanish settlements, after having been whipt during the day, are obliged to thank God in the evening for having blessed them with such masters!

such times if they would, and they would not be silent even if they could.*

Of these elements, brought originally together by the Catholic rent, and compressed more strongly into the same mass by the external force of the New Reformation and the Kildare Place schools, were chiefly composed the Provincial meetings. In a great metropolis such assemblies fill only with their effects the paragraph of the morning, or the conversation of the evening, and then die away before some other wonder of the

* Some of these opinions a few years earlier would have been considered political heresies by the entire body; some are still considered such by a few of the older priests. There are Eldons in every party; in every question men who pique themselves on being the last to be convinced. But the immense majority of the present priesthood are fresh and young both in mind and body. They started into life when every thing about them was in agitation; they passed through a course of education necessarily democratic, from the situation in which every Catholic more or less has been placed. Many of them born in the class immediately above the peasant, share all his passions; in contact with the upper classes by their daily functions, they share their judgment and understanding also. Such a being, when brought into action by events, must be very powerful. Accordingly the Catholic priesthood has displayed a union of energy and discretion in the late transactions rare in the clergy of any country, but until this moment, altogether unknown amongst the Catholic clergy of Ireland.

hour. But in the country, such an event is an epoch which fills a great portion of the peasant's existence; it is the hope of his entire family for months before, and the boast for months after: the speeches are read and re-read with the utmost assiduity, learned by heart, discussed, and cited, with an earnestness and sympathy unintelligible to a mere citizen.

The day and town in which the gathering was to take place were often contested with anxiety. It was a matter of local, almost of personal pride, to exhibit, under the most striking forms, the pretensions, the wealth, the intelligence, the enthusiasm, of the favoured county. The first Provincial meeting was held at Limerick. It was distinguished by a very numerous body of Protestant guests, who contributed their efforts, and rather too visibly their patronage, to the exertions of their Catholic countrymen. It is difficult to throw off the semblances of superiority and assumption, even when much of the reality has passed away. They condescended; they advised; they encouraged; they approved of: they had the appearance of masters who had consented generously to the manumission of their slaves. There were some indications of enthusiasm amongst the people, but they were much dulled by the still-existing divisions on the

subject of the late rejected bills. The "Wings," as they were termed, were still argued in every public meeting with an earnestness and animosity which too strongly reminded one of the old quarrels of the Veto. The subsequent assemblies held at Waterford, Cork, and above all, at Clonmel, were of a far different complexion. There the Catholic stood with the Protestant side by side, worthy of equality, and owning no distinction but what had been interposed by the artificial distinctions of the laws. But great events had taken place in the interval, which brought out on the surface of the national mind, qualities of which even the possessors had appeared ignorant. The Provincial meetings were either preparations for, or celebrations of these triumphs.* The meeting which was held for instance at Waterford immediately followed the great popular revolution to which we shall presently have to advert. It took place in the month of August, while the public heart was still burning with the exultation, and heaving with the throes of the late unparalleled victory. For

* It was at the Provincial meeting of Connaught, in 1828, that the Catholics first ceased to invite the Protestants as guests to their meetings. There were good reasons for the alteration. It placed both parties at their ease: the consequences were important.

weeks before, the requisitions of the several counties of Munster had been filled up. The honour of the convention had been conferred unanimously on Waterford; the first days of the week were employed in making the necessary arrangements for the public meeting: the committees every hour increased by new accessions from the most remote parts of the province; the Kerry, the Clare, the Limerick attendants (they might almost be called deputies), came clustering in. The meeting was held the third day in the Catholic church of the city. It is one of the most imposing Catholic structures in Ireland. The whole of the great area of the building was densely crowded with the population from the country. Immediately before the altar rose the platform, on which were assembled Catholic and Protestant indiscriminately around the chair. It was a glorious morning—and the spirit of the people in full unison with the joyousness of the season, and still fresh with the late triumph, burst forth in a tumult of enthusiasm, which soon spread its contagion to the most indifferent heart in that vast assembly. Several speeches had been heard with more than ordinary marks of approbation; when Mr. O'Connell at last appeared on the platform. It is not easy to forget the acclamations which followed

his magnificent harangue. It is on such occasions that Mr. O'Connell is truly eloquent : but on this occasion he far exceeded himself. There broke out a clamour of joy which had no words, but escaped in rude gestures from every man below him, when appealing in bold and awful language to the young blood of Ireland on the one side, and to the infatuated government of the country on the other, he threw himself as a mediator between both, and implored them, ere another generation, rushing impetuously into the ranks of present men, should render negotiation as in America impossible, to rouse from their slumber in haste, to extend the hand ere it was too late, and to save, rather than to have to rescue, through carnage, perhaps, and conflagration, their common country. The idea in itself was noble ; but from his hand and eye and tongue, it came with the effect of a sudden and appalling prophecy. The resolutions were in tone with this remarkable speech, and were received with approbation scarcely less enthusiastic. The dinner which took place the same day was honoured by a name of high and deserved lustre in England, but sacred to the recollections of Irishmen by claims of a far dearer import. Lord Fitzwilliam had now been absent from Ireland since the memorable and fatal

period of his recall : his presence that day appeared almost providential. He seemed to have been brought back by a just Heaven, to assist at a national triumph over the downfall of a public enemy. The family by whose intrigues, Ireland had been deprived of his services, was laid in the dust. It was a rare instance of visible retribution, and typical of the changes which in a few years more were to be consummated, on a far more extended scale, for the benefit of the entire country. That great assemblage dispersed as it had met in perfect order ; and in a few days nothing remained to mark its way but the instruction and example it had left behind it. The meeting of the same province, which took place two years after at Clonmel, was not less characteristic. It followed events very similar to those which had lately been celebrated at Waterford. The whole town presented the aspect of a continued triumph. Green branches covered every wall ; festoons, arches, trophies, appeared in every street. There were in the town during the meeting not less than fifty thousand peasants collected from the neighbouring counties. They presented all the externals, not of a loose and riotous rabble, but of a well-ordered, well-disciplined levy *en masse* from the mountains around. Their costume was green calico,

—green branches borne in every hand, green cockades fixed in every hat, gave them, at first sight, the appearance of a national army. During the meeting, which continued for three days, they were observed till late in the evening, and sometimes during a great portion of the night, in full military array, with their respective bands of music, and headed by their officers, parading about through every part of the town. At the signal given they regularly retired, and for the most part bivouacked in the open street. But during all that time, not a single instance of outrage, scarcely a symptom of intoxication, was visible. Their very gaiety was sober; their enthusiasm was restricted within the bounds of the most perfect propriety; and were it not for the wild eyes, and the quick gesture, and the turbulent features, of the crowds through which you had to pass, it would be difficult indeed to imagine that you stood in the midst of the too celebrated “men of Tipperary.”

Such was the nature and combination of the powers which the Provincial meetings found prepared before them. Every class soon fell into the rank-and-file discipline of a peaceable constitutional organization. Every meeting added new perfection to the manœuvre, new facility to the habit: it became soon as much a matter of course,

as the call of the local militia in England at the period of the apprehended invasion, but with this great difference, that the difficulty was in restraining, not in rousing them to such a call. The Association thus journeyed through almost every part of Ireland; it was seen, heard, and felt, periodically by the entire people: the "Government," as it was called, was every where; and every man fancied himself a part of the government.

In conjunction with the "Catholic Rent" and the annual "meetings of the Provinces," another measure not less calculated to appeal forcibly to the sympathies and understanding of the Catholic community, was soon after adopted. The Catholic prelacy of Ireland were requested by the Association to allow the clergy under their charge to commence, with as much expedition as might be practicable, the great work of a "National Census."* To Mr. Sheil, whose

* Nothing is more illustrative of the *total* distortion of apparently the most indifferent facts, arising out of the *guerre sourde* which every where reigned between the two parties, than this perpetual perversion of the census and statistics of Ireland. Sir William Petty states the population in 1672 to have amounted to 1,100,000; of these 800,000 were Catholics, and 300,000 Protestants: this harmonises with the proportion of property then in the hands of the Catholics.—*Survey*, p. 30. Burke, in his *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 28, gives the population in 1731 at 2,100,220; of these 700,453

name is so intimately identified with the entire progress and success of the Catholic cause, is

were Protestants, and 1,309,768 were Catholics. This surpasses the census of the established clergy in the same year by 90,000. Dr. Maude, who follows in 1733, lowers it to 2,000,000, and considerably diminishes the proportion of Protestants. He states the Protestants at 600,000, and the Catholics at 1,400,000. It was the interest of Dr. Maude to lower the number of Protestants; he was a great supporter of the charter-schools, &c. and it was deemed useful *then*, to prove that the Church was in danger from the *increasing* number of the Papists. Primate Boulter writes in the same sense, and in his letter, Feb. 15, 1728, a few years earlier, exaggerates far more considerably the Catholic population; he makes the proportion of Catholics to Protestants to be about five to one: they bear a proportion not much higher at present. The same spirit appears still more glaringly in his extravagant statement of the number of Popish priests. In the same letter he swells them up to 3000. In the report of the committee of the House of Lords in 1731, appointed to consider of the state of Popery in the kingdom, the number is stated to have amounted to not more than 1445. But the object of these intentional mistatements is sufficiently evident: see his Letter of *May 5, 1730*. The first sentence is a key to the whole. “*The great number of Papists in this kingdom, and the obstinacy with which they adhere to their own religion, occasions our trying what may be done with their children to bring them near to our church.*” It was the interest and the fashion of the ascendancy of that day (the reverse of this), to add to the numbers of the Papists by every mistatement in their power. The Papist from a similar principle depreciated; but, unfortunately, for many years he had melancholy experience on his side to justify his statements.

due the merit of this important suggestion. It was important in many senses of the word. The

The Protestant population doubled in the period between 1672 and 1727; the Catholic was nearly stationary; but this is easily to be accounted for; epidemics were frequent during all that interval amongst the lower classes, the great bulk of whom were of course Roman Catholics. A very remarkable change has however taken place since the years 1776 and 1778. The repeal of the prohibitory statutes on the purchase and leasing of land, materially augmented the Catholic population. Compare the depressed state of Ireland in Primate Boulter's *Letters*, vol. i. pp. 178. 224. 230. 236, 237. 240, in 1727, with its prosperity immediately after the treaty of Limerick, and its growing improvement ever since the first concessions. From that period down to the present day, the Catholic has been uniformly gaining on the Protestant population. From a review of the several estimates of the population of Ireland from Sir W. Petty's Survey in 1672, to the census of 55 Geo. III. c. 120. in 1821, it would appear, that notwithstanding all drawbacks, arising from civil war, emigration, and almost periodical epidemics, the population of Ireland doubles every sixty-five years. This will of course affect the increase of the Catholic population in a far greater ratio than the Protestant, exclusive of every allowance for absenteeism, emigration, &c. See *Mr. Seymour's Speech* on the emigration in the last year from the North of Ireland. It is not very easy, however, to rely upon such evidence. The general tendency is unquestionably not to diminish, but to exaggerate the number of the Protestants. We hear of the 400,000 Protestants capable of bearing arms, the 500,000 signatures to Protestant petitions, &c. Even Mr. Shaw Mason, in his

statistics of Ireland, and especially that portion of them which regards its population, like every

Parochial Survey (1814), has inadvertently fallen into a similar error. He has taken various reports from various parishes of the four provinces, and adding Protestants together and Catholics together, has concluded, that the proportion between these totals so found, is a good average representation of the proportion of the sects throughout the whole kingdom. The mistake has been, in not taking at the same time the relation of the parishes to the total population of the province, by which only the proportion stated to exist between the different sects could at all have approximated the reality. It may be questioned, on similar grounds, whether the census of the Catholic clergy *pro tanto* is of any material importance. If the census of all the parishes had been completed nearly within the same period, and on a uniform and scientific plan, much less apprehension of its inaccuracy might have been entertained. Party excitement and party objects of course obscured a little the clear vision of inquiry on such occasions; but the chief deficiency is in the system, and the mode in which it was carried into effect. Not more than 273 parishes out of 1000 (for the Catholic parishes are more numerous than the Protestant) had been reported from the commencement of the New Association up to the 14th June, 1828; that is, not much more than one-fifth of the whole. This did not include the parishes of the great towns. The census of one parish only in Dublin had been taken. These returns gave the following result:—

In Connaught, 284,354 Catholics.— $21\frac{3}{4}$ Catholics to every non-Catholic.

In Munster, 839,708 Catholics. 39,047 non-Catholics.— $21\frac{1}{2}$ Catholics to every non-Catholic.

thing else Irish, had been a subject of constant and very factious controversy. These inquiries were conducted not with a view to ascertain whether the gross population of the island had diminished or increased (though legislation had proceeded, for many years past, with a *subsultus* kind of movement, altogether regardless or ignorant of this very necessary information), but which of the two armies had gained the greater number of recruits, which of the two nations had most augmented, the Catholic or Protestant, during the past year. The question had become a mere matter of party; when it served to flatter a patron or to rouse a mob, very little scruple was felt in adding or subtracting as might best suit the purpose. This principle was the *animus* which had more or less originated and regulated every recent census in Ireland: in concurrence with other circumstances, such as the repugnance of the clergy to interfere in such matters (the result of the penal laws), and the belief of the people that such inquiries were connected with fiscal purposes, it rendered every report subject to the most serious question. They

In Leinster, 438,625 Catholics. 40,985 non-Catholics.—

11 Catholics to every non-Catholic.

In Ulster, 177,515 Catholics. 80,657 non-Catholics.—

2 Catholics to every non-Catholic.

were very veering, very partial, very strongly tinctured with the *suppressio veri* and the *suggestio falsi*, and for the most part at total variance with every probable theory of population. It does not appear that Mr. Sheil carried his views so far into general politics. It was not yet the time for such speculations; nor was he at all provided with such accurate machinery as could ensure him a just result. The Catholic clergy to whom the census was entrusted, however conscientious, were sometimes ignorant and seldom exempt, it is to be supposed, from the usual influences of a party. The moral eye, like the physical, contracts obliquities by the habits to which it is exposed. The Catholic clergyman had never been suffered by the laws to be other than a partisan. Another difficulty to be encountered was, the impossibility of obtaining a *simultaneous* return, and the fluctuation and consequent incorrectness to which all ex-parte reports must of necessity be subject. But this is but a very partial view of the policy of Mr. Sheil. He had employed the instrument for a far different purpose. He used it as a powerful lever for the promotion of the cause. He wished to place habitually before the mind of the priest and of the peasant, of the Protestant and of the Catholic, the flagrant disparity between the two sects, particu-

larly in the South. He wished to give a visible proof of the iniquity of a system which required so large a sacrifice of the happiness of the many, to the luxury and monopoly of the few. This was done effectually ; and new facts came in every week, at the meetings of the Association, vouching an extreme discordancy between the former statements of the ascendancy, and the new statement of things as they were. Every week, one or other of the clergy of the different dioceses sent in their report : they were immediately read, entered on the minutes of the Association, published, and preserved.* But no effort was made to obtain speedily a more general view. It was rather an object to interpose delay. It was useful that these means of agitation amongst others should not be too speedily exhausted. The whole end was then to excite ; organization was left for after consideration ; and for purposes of excitation no better means could possibly have been devised. It was a concise and simple statement of wrong, attested under the immediate hands of their clergy. In these reports, every singular anomaly arising out of the

* In the discharge of this duty Dr. Kelly, Catholic bishop of Waterford, particularly distinguished himself. He was the first prelate to begin, and the only one I believe fully to complete, his portion of the census.

perverted state of the laws was studiously put forward. Whole parishes were stated to exist, where it was not possible to meet a single Protestant : rich rectorships were discovered without a single parishioner : teachers were mentioned to have been paid out of lavish parliamentary grants, who had not a single scholar : churches were allowed to fall to ruin by their opulent incumbents, that they might be rebuilt by a starving people, while within a few miles distance, flocks of thousands might be found with no other chapel, than a thatched hovel to shelter them from the visitation of the elements : these and many other contrasts of all kinds between what ought to be and what was, now successively pressed upon the public attention ;* grievance

* Major Warburton, in his evidence before the House, makes an interesting statement, which sufficiently coincides with the reports of the Census, and will give some idea of the exciting nature of these returns. He observes that in the arch-diocese of Tuam, the state of the Catholic congregations and churches is most wretched. They are mostly thatched, and totally insufficient to contain the people. In many instances the public prayers are celebrated in the open air ; and for the most part the congregation remains on the outside, in consequence of the want of accommodation within. There are no funds for the building and repairing of churches in the arch-diocese, except the voluntary contributions of the people, of the clergy, the bishops, and the aid which they

became a matter not of loose invective, but of figures, and calculation. Each man's local

occasionally receive from the generosity of the neighbouring Protestant gentry. The lower class are particularly gratified with the repairs of their chapels, and willingly contribute their labour, straw, &c. An assessment is generally made by the people themselves, by the heads of villages, &c. The clergy appoint a committee of these heads and a treasurer, who receives the assessment, and expends it under the eyes of the people, but there are no means of enforcing it, except by refusing religious rites, and particularly churching. The general average expense of these country chapels is from 700*l.* to 800*l.* In the richer parts of the country, edifices of considerable magnitude, such as the Catholic churches of Kilkenny, Dungarvan, &c. have of late been erected, but the funds for these buildings have generally been raised, at least in great part, elsewhere. Now turn to the Protestant churches. "The greatest hardship," says another witness, "is, that the Catholic is called upon to build and repair churches, where that building is totally unnecessary, as it is in a great number of instances in the South: in the county of Kerry for example, I know parishes where churches have been built for a single individual or two. I know many instances, and there is one going on at this moment in the parish of Taghadoo in the county of Kildare; there is but a single Protestant in the parish, a Mr. Grierson. They are building a church there, that I understand will cost about 1000*l.* *The Catholics offered to build a dwelling-house* for Mr. Grierson." This is one amongst the many instances with which Ireland abounds. Colonel Curry states, that "the great grievance was not the collection of the rates, but their misapplication;" the money is often given

experience was called into action : every man contributed something from his own knowledge and sufferings, to the heavy sum. Foreign na-

to some contractor, who does the work ill, and has no inspector to control him ; “ in fact, he takes the contract *to do* the work, and he does *not do it*.” “ The assessment is generally in the hands of a few Protestants ; they fix the rate, and may give it to some one Protestant *as a job*, and the work is often extremely *ill* done, or not *done at all*.” But with these admissions, it may be a matter of some surprise, why such expensive and unnecessary applications of the poor man’s money should be permitted to exist. “ A small congregation,” I apprehend, says another witness, “ always appeared *wherever there was a church built*.” But “ this small congregation,” within the personal knowledge of many Catholics, was often imported from the neighbouring parish as a plea or pretext for building the church. The parishioners were made for the church, not the church made for the parishioners. Such facts as these, and many more of a similar nature connected with education, &c. formed the accompaniments of this census ; but it was rendered much more ample subsequently by the collateral assistance of the churchwardens. It would be well worth the trouble to compare the census given by the clergy with the reports of these churchwardens. The latter extended to the state of the elective franchise, state of proselytism, &c. in each parish. They form, as far as they go, a very instructive record of Catholic grievance and Catholic strength ; but they are both very incomplete.—The Census is given in the *Appendix*.—The Churchwardens’ Reports, if published, would fill many volumes.

tions became interested in the statement, and commented with great justice and energy on the conclusions to which it necessarily gave rise. A sympathy more positive and minute for Catholic suffering, was created in France and America, the important consequences of which we shall have to notice later : the cause of Ireland became in some measure the cause of all Europe. Her question assumed importance in the eyes of every civilised nation : it was pleaded before all mankind : many of these advantages arose out of the Census. Till the period of its introduction, the details of Catholic grievance and Catholic strength were comparatively unknown.

Such was the moral preparation of the Catholic portion of the nation for the great events which were so soon to follow. They were not the exploits of a day, or the sudden consequences of an impulse to which the Catholic mind had inadvertently been forced, but the results of a great system of political education, which had been going on with astonishing rapidity, under the auspices of the Catholic Association. Had they not occurred then, they would have occurred later ; the germ was in the popular mind, and under some form or other it would soon have developed itself : it could not have much longer brooked

either opposition or delay. To England, unacquainted as she was with previous and preparatory events, every thing appeared a marvel and an anomaly. Englishmen had nothing in their own government or in their own habits to explain it. The explosion burst upon them before they had the time or opportunity of examining the train. Nor were the anti-Catholics in Ireland much less astonished than their high Tory allies in the sister country. The little communication between Catholic and Protestant ; the distance at which the main mass of the two interests were situated, the Protestants to the North, the Catholics to the South ; the habitual contempt with which the Protestants regarded the contentions and declamations of the Catholics, rendered the Protestant Ascendancy, as is the case with all ascendancies, inattentive, ignorant, and incredulous. They treated their combinations with the same scorn with which they would have regarded the momentary collection of a crowd. They termed their union "a rope of sand ;" they laughed at attempts which had so often before terminated in discomfiture ; they sat down in security amidst the threats and attacks of "a mere mob." But the circumstances which now took place in a moment dissipated this illusion. In an instant the alarms of their whole

body were excited, and the exertions which were made on every side were sufficient evidence how deeply and sensibly they felt their danger. But it was too late : the blow had been struck. From that day forth the anti-Catholics lost, in one way or other, the secret of their strength ; thenceforward nothing was heard in the anti-Catholic camp, but bitterness and vexation at defeats which followed each other with astonishing rapidity, murmurs of changes, projects of desertion and recrimination and invective against recent apostacy.* Power had gone

* The conversion of Mr. Brownlow, but far more the undaunted avowal of this conversion, ought no doubt to have been a warning. But there are none so blind as those who do not wish to see. The Ascendancy railed like children at the unexpected desertion, and expended themselves in vain injuries on the man, while true politicians would have been engaged in inquiring into the causes and motives of the change. It was indeed a sign of the times, and hailed as such, with enthusiasm by every Catholic. Such sacrifices, made in such a manner, are not ordinary events. They mark the first turning of the tide in the mind of a nation, the first decisive change, after which all is progress and success. Mr. Brownlow's own account of this moral revolution in his own nature, might well stand the type or expression of that general but less conspicuous revolution which at the same time was going on in the intellect of the whole country. There never was a more difficult battle, or a nobler triumph. It is one of those few things which redeem from the impeachment of

out from the Ascendancy, and her retiring gods, like the guardian genii of Alexandria when the city was on the eve of falling into the hands of the enemy, were heard passing away in rebuke and lament under the earth. From a quarter the least suspected came the assault. The Englishman who remembered the contumelies flung by friend and foe upon the degraded freeholders in 1825, could not believe it possible, that from a source so corrupted could arise any hope or aid in the great struggle for Catholic liberty. The same causes,—the same vices in the nature of the tenure, the same tyranny in the landlord, the same depression and debasement in the tenant,—were still supposed to exist. This reasoning under ordinary circumstances would have been just; and the contradictions, which it met with afterwards in the conduct of the freeholders, might well be assimilated to a miracle. But there was a very qualifying circumstance indeed, altogether omitted in this

general turpitude, and convenient traffic of principle and opinion, the great mass of political life. Head of a party, with hereditary claims justified by personal merit to their attachment and respect, he sacrifices all, and all in an instant, to the overpowering mastery of truth. The sacrifice was great, but the reward was still greater. Such a man deserved to see “the salvation of his country.”

calculation. The freeholder had during the last two years been habituated to a course of previous moral training, and the subject of his wrongs had been brought down by the measures of the Association, to the door of the poorest peasant in the land. The Catholic leader saw nothing in the result, but the very natural consequences of a judicious plan. The mind of the people was ripe, and the fruits naturally followed. At the same time it must be admitted, that neither then, nor at a still later period, was there any thing like a preconcerted *whole*, in the contemplation either of the leaders, or the body which they affected to govern. Most of these measures were the children of circumstance; they were created by the moment, and were pursued from necessity. For a considerable time, the only general principle had in view was a very simple one, constantly increasing constitutional agitation: *Mobilitate viget* was the motto of the Association; whatever was in accord with this principle was right; whatever was opposed to it, was wrong. Every effort was used to sustain it; every circumstance was seized to aid these efforts. This was the secret of their entire policy; this they conceived to be the indispensable and certain means of obtaining redress. The events to which we are about to

advert, are a very accurate illustration of this position. The immediate causes which produced them had no connexion whatever with the proceedings of the Association. They neither arose out of its suggestion nor were much advanced by its assistance. They are exclusively to be attributed to a most favourable and unexpected concurrence of circumstances in the first instance ; and in the second, to the inherent spirit of the people itself. This spirit indeed had been engendered by the Association, but it shone forth without waiting for its appeal.

It was in the county of Waterford that the revolution commenced. A circumstance insignificant in itself, was the spark which set fire to the train. The Marquess of Wellesley had been publicly assaulted in the theatre, and addresses had been prepared, and presented on his escape. The insult to the exalted individual and the high office which he filled, required and justified these expressions of public indignation ; but too much emphasis was given to the matter, and party spirit even then ran high. Waterford was not backward ; a requisition numerously and respectably signed, praying that a county meeting might without delay be convened, was presented in the ordinary form to the High Sheriff. The High Sheriff, unfortunately for himself and

his party, was then at Curraghmore, the seat of the Marquess of Waterford. With the counsel, if not by the direction of the Marquess, he peremptorily refused the prayer of the requisitionists. The other magistrates of the county were then applied to. Several magistrates, and amongst them twelve Protestants, stepped forward. The gratitude of the Catholics was as usual exaggerated ; subsequent circumstances proved that it was not in all instances very well bestowed. But the individuals were forgotten in the object immediately in view ; for the moment, every consideration was sacrificed to the cause. A public dinner, expressive of the approbation of the Catholics, was given to the " twelve honest Protestant magistrates." This dinner was the seed of all the after events. Every circumstance connected with the rejection of their requisition had now transpired, and the house of Curraghmore, the hereditary opponent of the Catholics, was denounced in language which soon found an echo in every heart. The general Election was fast approaching ; it was deemed a favourable opportunity of visiting them for the first time with the fullest expression of Catholic indignation. Before the party broke up, a meeting was called for the purpose of devising the

best measures for securing in future the popular representation of the county.

The county of Waterford had now for more than seventy years been represented by the Beresfords. Nothing could more strongly mark the perfect degradation of the Catholics. Here was a constituency nearly in the proportion of forty-one Catholics to every Protestant, and a candidate openly avowing on the hustings, election after election, his undisguised hostility to their rightful claims. In England, such a perfect and continued discordancy between the electors and the elected could not possibly have endured. The matter in Ireland hardly excited attention, much less reproach. The long continuance of the penal laws had rendered it natural. The franchise had been conceded by the aristocracy in 1793 for the single use of the aristocracy; the Catholic freeholders had, up to that moment, fully justified the sagacity of their masters. But in the county of Waterford other circumstances had combined to keep the people in a state of depression. They had to contend against a power which had been a match for all Ireland. The Beresfords had far exceeded, in patronage and influence, all the other families of the Undertakers. Through them, and by

them, the English cabinet had long carried on its misrule, and, ignorant or careless, this absentee government, like all other absentees, surrendered up the wretched farm to the spoliation and oppression of these resident middlemen. A Beresford banished Lord Fitzwilliam, and left the country a prey to those civil contentions which terminated at last in a rebellion, the traces of which are still festering in the recollections of all classes of Irishmen. The Union indeed had reduced within straiter limits the stretching ambition of the family, and Ireland was gradually withdrawn, department after department, from its grasp. But the bad influences which emanated from them still remained undiminished in the county of Waterford. Not a place of any consideration which had not been its gift; not a situation which was not within its patronage: it held the fortunes, and was supposed to hold the will, of a large portion of the population, in its leash. The representative of the family (the late Marquess of Waterford) was a kindly instrument for the administration of such powers. Politically speaking, he had many prejudices, but few animosities; * was

* The Marquess of Waterford (then Lord Tyrone) intro-

haughty by habit, rather than inclination ; had good intentions, stifled by weak health ; and acted less in his own character, than as the necessary organ of family and party interests. His brother, Lord George Beresford, was the actual member. He had some merit in the eyes of the Catholics. He had succeeded to his relative John Claudius. He was never accused of any political talent ; was an exceedingly friendly and kind man in social life, and had he been permitted to indulge his own predilections, would probably have preferred any other occupation to the *dura necessitas* of defending or impugning political or religious opinions, before an unwilling audience, from the county hustings. For several years the murmur of a contest had not been heard. The county had sunk since Mr. Paliser's ill-advised attempt into the happy quietude of a borough. The Marquess was economical ; the coffers of the family were full ; all attack ex-

duced the Catholic Relief bill into the House of Commons in 1793. He subsequently commanded the Waterford regiment during the rebellion of 1798. His humanity, in those trying and disastrous scenes, honourably distinguished him from other members of his family. He was known by the *soubriquet* of the " Croppy Colonel ;" a designation applied by friend and foe, and, under the circumstances, a real eulogy.

cept from the gentry, and on the old system, appeared preposterous. The freeholders still *belonged* to their respective landlords, and did not even conceive the idea of acting, out of the range of this dependence, for themselves. They were, so far as their franchise or its exercise was concerned, mere serfs; and the Duke of Devonshire on one side, and the Marquess of Waterford on the other, were the joint Lords Paramount.

Such was the state of the county, when the Catholic and liberal party first resolved to throw off the yoke which had now oppressed them for nearly a century. The gentry, Catholic as well as Protestant, had hitherto acquiesced in this division of the county between the two parties. But the representation, as far as any impression was to be produced on parliament, was no representation at all. They were now determined that their opinions *should be heard*, and they lost no time in looking about for a member who could and would *express them*. The candidate they selected was inferior indeed, in the long and undisturbed possession of government patronage, in high title, in extensive pecuniary resources, to his adversary, but in every other particular he enjoyed a very pre-eminent advantage. It is true, he was young: he was untried; he had no personal connexion as yet with the county; but Mr. Stuart's

name was not unknown : he was descended from a family dear to Irish recollections : he was possessed of a large and ancient inheritance ; above all, he was the supporter of liberal principles, and a determined opponent to anti-Catholic despotism. This was a bond of union which required no strengthening. A message was instantly despatched to Mr. Stuart, then on his way to Italy. It found him in the Tyrol. He obeyed the call of the Catholics, and in a few weeks after landed at Waterford.

The enthusiasm which this circumstance produced was as yet confined to the upper and middle classes of the body. The people were unacquainted, except by vague rumours, with the struggle which was preparing. The address of Mr. Stuart was in the ordinary style ; but it called upon Catholics to judge for their own interests, and he professed himself ready to stand out, and strike the first blow, for their liberation. But the county rather wished than hoped ; and it was some time before it could be prevailed on to enter zealously and seriously into the contest.

Dinners were given,—and meetings held,—and the partisans of the sitting member laughed at the unavailing efforts to destroy an old rooted ascendancy. After a little indulgence in the

Irish propensity for speech-making,—a few riots, terminating in broken heads, trials, and heavy costs,—a paper campaign in the newspapers,—and a lavish expenditure of harmless addresses, placards, and resolutions,—they promised their patron that every thing would return in a very short time to its old sobriety. The very agents of Mr. Stuart gave him scarcely better hopes; the Association was silent in public,—in private its members smiled, and sometimes sneered at the absurdity. The rest of the country for the most part was indifferent. They considered it a very laudable Quixotic experiment; shook their heads at the freeholders; and oracularly pronounced that all this patriotism was very well, but that the *virtus post nummos* adage would still hold, and that it was idle to think that any organization could ever be attempted in Ireland, which could not be dispersed by the timely scattering of a few handfuls of gold-dust.

The dissolution, it was supposed, would have taken place in October. Had that been the case, no appeal beyond the ordinary gentle applications of landlords to their dependants, would have been necessary. The majority of votes on the registry books was in favour of Mr. Stuart. It would have been one of the ordi-

nary aristocratic elections; the house of Dro-mana would have vanquished in fair feudal lists the house of Curraghmore; and there the matter, without any lesson to the country, would have quietly ended. But, fortunately for the country, the election was protracted. It was now necessary to recur to other tactics. Nothing could be done without an incursion into the enemy's territory. The *people* had at last become important, and all future appeals were made to the *people*.

The first indication of this intention roused a simultaneous clamour of indignation from the anti-Catholics. The divine right of landlords* was attacked. The cherished relations of landlord

* A very decisive instance of the universality of this opinion amongst Catholics as well as Protestants, at the outset of this election, was their conduct in reference to the Duke of Devonshire. His Grace, "respecting the constitutional rights of the people, refused as a peer to interfere with the votes of his 50*l.* freeholders, but expected *of course* that his 40*s.* freeholders would abstain from giving their vote for either of the rival candidates." This temporary disfranchisement, after a fruitless expostulation with his Grace, was quietly acquiesced in by the liberal party. A little later the people *themselves* threw off the allegiance, and supported, as they termed it, in mass, "the same cause which had been supported by the Duke of Devonshire, and others of the sixty-nine peers." The immediate causes of this change will be referred to hereafter.

and tenant (of Irish landlord and Irish tenant) were violated. It was a daring "encroachment on the rights of private property," "highly ungentlemanlike," "should not be tolerated by any government," "a palpable insurrection," and must sooner or latter terminate in a renewal of the horrors of 1798. In the surprise and indignation of the moment they forgot even their own interests. Lord George's agents put forward in his name two addresses, which any reasonable man would have supposed had been framed in the committee-room of his antagonist. They were precisely the very documents which a wily electioneer would have composed to rouse every passion and prejudice of the Irish Catholic freeholder against him. They were employed by his opponents; they did half their work. These addresses inveighed against the demagogues of the Association; villified the priests; spurned the people as superstitious slaves, and then turned round, and asked them for their "sweet voices." The people were ungrateful, and refused them. Money was then poured out,—and trampled on. It was too late to win back the allegiance of their ancient dependants. The defection spread rapidly through every part of the country. It soon reached the Marquess's own town of Kilmacthomas. Instead of the

ordinary greetings, the "hereditary member" was drummed out with music, the most afflicting which could fall on noble ears. The church and state was now in danger. Additional magistrates and additional troops were applied for and granted without much difficulty by a complaisant Castle Secretary. But the insurrection was not to be stopt by the usual expedients; the desertion of the Catholic tenants from their anti-Catholic landlords every day increased, and in a few months the whole forty-shilling constituency of the country ranged itself on the side of the popular party. The very town of Portlaw, situated at the gate of the Marquess's demesne of Curraghmore, at last rebelled. John Claudius Beresford had appeared amongst them.*

* This remarkable blunder, "*quem Deus vult perdere*," &c. was hailed with the greatest exultation at Waterford. It occurred under very favourable circumstances. The people of Portlaw had not been addressed at the outset of the election, from an apprehension of exposing them to the vengeance of their landlord. They felt mortified at this neglect, and sent a deputation to the committee, entreating them to appear amongst them. It first seemed impossible to comply with this requisition; it was the Sunday before the election, and on a week day it was not easy to withdraw so large a population from their work. The Portlaw men solved the difficulty, and the meeting was appointed

The dissolution at last took place ; the writ

for the ensuing Friday. In the mean time it was understood that the use of the chapel had been refused by the parish priest, in consequence of its being situated on the property of the Marquess. An order was obtained from the Bishop to have it opened, and a deputation of the committee set off, to address the freeholders. On their approaching Portlaw, they were received with the loudest congratulations ; crowds rushed down from the neighbouring mountains ; bonfires appeared on every height ; green branches waved in every hand. The chapel had been forced open by the people. It was densely crowded ; the whole vicinity was collected ; the very workmen in the Marquess's demesne had thrown by their spades, and rushed down to join their countrymen. The agitators then addressed the people ; resolutions against the Beresfords were passed with shouts, and acclamations which reached the mansion, and the people were about to separate peaceably, when a jaunting car, with a tall, sal-low-looking person in it, passed rapidly through the multitude. He was soon recognised : it was John Claudius Beresford. Not a shout was heard ; not a word ; not a hiss : he appeared like an apparition amongst them ; no one could believe it possible ; it was a long time before they could recover their astonishment. Such was the man, the Beresfords had brought down to canvass for them ! To the last moment, with the usual blindness of their party, they could not, or they would not read the changes of the times. But the freeholders of Waterford were not the same men whom at former elections he had duped, by kneeling in their chapels, taking their holy water, and listening to their mass. They had begun to read ; they were no longer ignorant of 1798.

was issued, whether by accident or design,* in the very week, on the very day, most favourable to the interests of the Beresfords. The majority on the books against Mr. Stuart was overpowering. It amounted to more than six hundred votes. The triumph of the Beresfords seemed certain. It was already proclaimed in every eye. All this was natural. What could their partisans know of the people, of their hatreds, their wrongs, their hopes, their determination? Even many of Mr. Stuart's committee were of the same opinion. With the exception only of one or two of the members, and some of the principal clergy, none seemed to feel a well-grounded assurance of success. Mr. O'Connell himself (Mr. Stuart's counsel), for the two first days after his arrival from Dublin, thought the thing impossible; he was sad, doubtful, and taciturn. It was not until he had been brought face to face with the people at Dungarvan and Lismore, and had begun to observe the new spirit which had lately been kindled within them, that he fully understood the change. The point now was, not to excite, but to restrain. The freeholders of

* It was rumoured, though probably with little justice, that some compromise had been made to complete this arrangement: the price for the accommodation, was said to have been the borough of Armagh.

the Duke of Devonshire, who had not been yet appealed to, spurned the neutrality, and came down in mass. Not a single man could be kept at home.* Their whole families followed, as to a national triumph. The *odia in longum jaciens, quæ reconderet, auctaque promeret*, was never more truly exemplified. Their day of peaceable vengeance had now arrived. The two popular candidates entered Waterford, amidst an immense multitude, bearing before them the banners of their respective baronies, and marshalled for several miles, in the most perfect military array; during the entire procession, the most exemplary propriety was preserved; indeed, from the beginning to the end of the election, not a single outrage, scarcely a symptom of the most trifling disorder, occurred. The people were *unanimous*; they had no one to oppose them; they had the most implicit faith, and confidence in their leaders. The soldiers, who were assembled to the number of

* A steam-boat had been sent up the Blackwater to bring down the Duke of Devonshire's freeholders to Waterford: it was intended to keep them separated, lest they should become infected by the popular mania. Mr. O'Connell addressed them very humorously at Lismore on the perils of embarking in the "tea-kettle." The wives and daughters of the freeholders took the alarm, and the "tea-kettle" returned empty.

four thousand in the neighbourhood, had nothing to act on; there was no tumult, no resistance; they were mere spectators. The people regarded them as their protectors, shook hands with them, and cheered them repeatedly as they passed on. The next day the Election commenced; the four or five first hours determined the complete triumph of the people. The first men who polled, were the freeholders of Kilmacthomas, and Portlaw. Some days previous to the election, they had grouped round the carriage of one or two gentlemen of the committee, who were passing through the former place. A venerable old man stepped from the crowd, and addressed them, in the name of his fellow freeholders. "They had but one favour to ask, and they believed, they had deserved it; as they had been the first to *declare* against the Beresfords, they hoped, they should be allowed the honour of being the first also, to *vote* against them." The favour was easily granted, and they poured in, on all sides, to Waterford. There was a considerable majority the first day against the Beresfords; it was almost exclusively from their own freeholders. It rapidly increased. Every hour some new circumstance occurred to kindle the enthusiasm of the people. The very opening of the contest was marked by unusual features. After the two candidates had been pro-

posed in due form, a gray-haired old man of the name of Casey, well known in the country as the first freeholder who had dared to refuse the Beresfords, arose and proposed Daniel O'Connell, Esq. "as a fit and proper person to represent the county of Waterford in parliament."* The effect of this novel scene was indescribable. Lord George started: his adherents arose to prevent the insult, but were calmed by Mr. Wallace, the counsel of Lord George, and Mr. O'Connell was permitted to deliver one of the most truly eloquent harangues which has probably ever fallen from the mouth of a candidate. He concluded, after a two hours' speech, "with an assurance that he did not wish to disturb the *unanimity* of the county, and should accordingly withdraw his pretensions." The intimation relieved the opposite party, and in some degree the party of Messrs. Stuart and Powers' friends (for had he persevered, he would undoubtedly have been elected); but the

* This was a preconcerted arrangement, in order to give Mr. O'Connell an opportunity of delivering his opinions from the hustings. It is the first instance I believe on record, since the commencement of the penal code, of a Catholic having been proposed as a candidate at an election. Some opposition was made; but it was soon overruled. This was the first suggestion: Clare carried the suggestion into effect.

impression remained with the people, and his name and influence, continued to be identified with the election. Every day some storehouse or apartment, where the freeholders were kept in strait custody by the opposite party, was broken open ; the staunchest supporters deserted ; men who had received bribes, held up the notes in open court, and suddenly denounced their employers ; in fine, defeat came in every shape of mortification ; and before the fifth day closed, Lord George retired from the contest, and Mr. Stuart was announced to have been duly elected by a vast majority. Not one half of Mr. Stuart's own freeholders, were brought into action. The battle was fought, with the forces of the enemy. The most perfect good temper prevailed throughout. The people during the entire struggle manifested an order and discipline, till that moment unknown, and which more than any other circumstance confounded, and astonished their enemies. Not a single outrage sullied their success : the victory of the just cause, was in every particular, pure and perfect.

The surprise of all Ireland, at this extraordinary intelligence was extreme. Each party gave his interpretations, and assigned his causes ; some attributed it to the Association ; others to the priests ; others to the spirit of the people

themselves. As the influence of this great event has confessedly had an effect on the destinies of the country far superior to any other circumstance preceding it, it may not be altogether inconsistent with the rapid character of a sketch, to dwell a little longer, on the real principles by which it was effected.

The most remarkable features in the Waterford election were, the high state of moral enthusiasm in favour of a great principle to which the people were elevated, and the singular steadiness, perseverance, and calmness, with which they brought it, to bear triumphantly upon their purpose.*

* Innumerable instances occurred of this sobriety and firmness of purpose in every part of the county. At Waterford the butchers, the most turbulent portion as it may well be conceived of the community, formed themselves, *ex mero motu*, and without any suggestion from the committee, into a "society for the preservation of the peace" during the election. Their resolutions were admirable, full of sense, spirit, and determination. They divided the city into walks, and were to be found in parties of six, with white wands, traversing the streets during the night, and sending home to their respective houses every freeholder who was met rambling after eleven o'clock. It was singular how implicitly their authority was obeyed by every one, without any other commission, than the "good of the cause." The Mayor indeed grew angry at this undue usurpation of his powers, and the High Sheriff expostulated with the butchers at his request (rather ironically to be sure) from the hustings

Both these results, were produced by a combination of various means, which were themselves suggested by circumstances.

The "Catholic Rent," the "Provincial Meetings," and "the Census," together with the spread of education, produced by the efforts of the New Reformists, had already prepared the mind of the people for any appeal which might be made to it, by the friends of public liberty.* The Association had given them the habit of acting in concert, and, what was scarcely less valuable, an implicit reliance upon their leaders, and their clergy. This was every thing. The application of these powers, was afterwards easy. The clergy, at the outset, were as usual divided into two parties--the old and the young. The old, were averse to all species of disturbance, and, with very indistinct views of civil rights, thought it an indecorous departure from their ecclesi-

on the impropriety of their having taken the peace-keeping of the city, into their own hands. But, besides a good-humoured laugh, nothing followed. They continued abstaining from whiskey, and doing the voluntary constable during the entire election.

* "If your hand be strong enough to keep down, what could it not do, if it were employed in raising up?" was the emphatic, and just observation of one of these gentlemen, to an agitator who praised the tranquillity of the people.

astical character, the engaging even remotely in the tumult of a contested election. Many too had been in the habit of fearing, and some of respecting, the Beresfords, and before the people had pronounced *decidedly* in the matter, were much more disposed (a singular proof of the effects of the penal code) to take a part with their old taskmasters, than with the liberals, and Mr. Stuart. The young were of a very different temper: for the most part they had been educated at Maynooth, and had carried with them, as I have already remarked, all that spirit of independence and democracy, which of late years has more or less, become the characteristic of every description of Irish Catholic education. They were full of the spirit of the times, and thoroughly acquainted with every detail of recent politics. No wonder then, they should have seized with the utmost earnestness, the first opportunity of exerting themselves, in a cause which they believed to be that of every Catholic in the country. But in all this there was nothing of the priest, nothing of that spiritual ambition which seeks for the ascendancy of a particular caste, at the expense of the liberties of the rest of the community. They entered the arena like common citizens,* and

* “ Qui ultrò se offerens respondit se civem Romanum

carried on the struggle, with little or no reference to their spiritual power. The diocese of Waterford, was then governed by a remarkable man. He had passed much of his early life in America, and had been long removed from the influence of modern Catholic politics ; but he was gifted with a clear understanding, a true sense of the sufferings and wrongs of the body, and a strenuous and determined will, to use every means in his power to redress them. Dr. Kelly did not for an instant hesitate, which course should be adopted. His accession to the liberal party was important. But many of the old priests still held out, and were not to be subdued, until the people had so strongly expressed their opinion, that no choice was left them between co-operation, and open quarrel.* The

esse, et illud velle quod ipsi vellent,” was the answer of the Abbot of Monte Cassino on a similar occasion. This, was the entire principle of the interference of the clergy.

* In many instances at the outset, the priests from the best of motives, felt the greatest reluctance to address the people. No fund existed at that time, for the protection of the freeholders. As good pastors, they could not be induced to expose their flocks to the danger of losing every means of subsistence, which they and their families possessed. In those cases, the people often outstepped their clergyman. The Catholic clergy are paid by the voluntary contributions of the people. A clergyman of the county of Waterford,

people, in the first instance, might have been excited by the priest, as they were by the demagogue; but in the progress of the struggle, it was not the priest who led, but the people. It was public opinion acting in its boldest and most extensive form, upon priest, gentleman, and peasant, alike. The case was perfectly analogous to that of Spain and Greece. There, if the priest joined the popular cause, he immediately obtained an unbounded influence, a natural consequence where the contest was semi-religious, and where the laws and the government took care that it should be so: but if in any instance he seceded, then was he not only regarded as a traitor to his country, but as an apostate, and a renegade to his God. The priest after a little time, was hurried along by the torrent, and had only to decide whether he should ride on its surface, or be buried altogether beneath the stream. There was much clamour at the time, and much misrepresentation after-

supposed to be in the interests of the Beresfords, but otherwise popular, had come to a remote part of the county on his annual "quest." He was in the habit of generally bringing back from 50*l.* to 60*l.*, but on opening the box after service, he found it to contain not more than 2*s.* 6*d.* This fact speaks volumes. The priests, were here kindled by the people, and not the people by the priests.

wards, on the abuse of his spiritual influence. It might be sufficient answer to such imputations to say, that six several petitions complaining of this abuse have been successively presented to parliament, and witnesses procured by means the most discreditable to support their allegations, but that five of these six petitions have been rejected, after a deliberate examination by the legislature, and one withdrawn by the petitioners themselves. But the slightest consideration of the circumstances and the persons implicated, will render this unnecessary. The arguments which they used, had no connexion with their spiritual power. They were based on the principles of general morality, and applicable to the rights and duties of all classes of citizens. They neither fulminated excommunications, nor withheld the sacraments as it is averred; but they spoke of the crime of perjury, and of the oath of the freeholder at the hustings, and of the duty of the elector, and of the baseness of bribery; and if such themes made the impression which they ought to have done, it is to the credit of the priest and of the people, and an influence which every good man should obey, and of which every free citizen should be proud.

These instructions of the priest in private

were seconded by the earnest co-operation of the agitators in public. Their first care was to provide a proper organization. The system they adopted for the purpose was simple, but all-powerful. A general committee was established in the county town. It consisted nominally of many members—a few only acted. They had their branch committees in every barony, constituted on a similar principle. The priests were honorary members. In attendance on these committees were two local agents, who furnished weekly, their reports. The baronial committees made similar reports, to the general committee, and received in turn its instructions. Each parish priest, each local agent, and each baronial committee, had their registry-book. They were required to make upon each name, besides, the usual remarks relative to right of voting, &c. their own particular and personal observations. These books were handed in from the several parts of the country a week or two previous to the election, and from this information was compiled an analytic view (which scarcely presented a single error when brought to the test of experience) of the temper and dispositions of the entire county. The whole of this machinery was soon in operation, and worked admirably; but it was chiefly calculated to preclude confusion, to restrain and apply the excitement, but not to create the ex-

citement itself. Something more was requisite. It was determined to make an almost individual appeal to the forty-shilling constituency of the county. A certain number of the committee were deputed to address each parish, in rotation. They chose Sunday for these assemblies, to avoid the inconvenience and tumult of specially-convened meetings; and for two months previous to the election, they were to be seen, before the altar of the respective chapels, haranguing the people on the discharge of their approaching duties. Their reasoning was short and simple. They took the "bribery oath" in one hand, the "two addresses" of Lord George Beresford in the other. They asked the people, how they could take the money of the Beresfords and that oath at the same time? They asked the old and young, whether their priests had not told them that perjury was a crime? They told them, that the oath which had just been read should be put to every freeholder: they warned them to reflect upon its deep import, and to reflect in due time. Then were the addresses opened and read, and commented on article by article. "Who were these Beresfords?" it was demanded;—their whole history from their first settlement in the country (in consequence of their marriage with the Catholic heiress, Lady Catherine de la Poer) to their final feats in the late rebellion, was de-

tailed. "Was a Catholic so base that he did not even know, when he was trampled on? If he doubted, let him read their manifestoes;—there they gloried in their hatred to his faith;—there they proclaimed their enmity eternal;—there they trod on the Catholic freeholder as if he had been their hereditary slave! In striking at the Beresfords, they struck at the very heart of the Ascendancy. The great opportunity desired so long, was now at length before them—they had only to will the deed, and it was done!" Every discourse concluded, with the most earnest entreaties, to preserve order and peace. They appealed to them, by the name of their enemies to be tranquil;—not to allow a single word to escape them, which could be construed by their opponents into a violation of the laws. The laws were their protectors, and every thing could be gained by a determined and calm attitude—nothing by brute force.* The priest then

* The Bribery oath, and this admirable discipline of the people—a lesson they seized with an intelligence and justness of reasoning quite incomprehensible to a stranger—were the main-springs of the subsequent success. In the very heat of the election, strong and stout men were to be seen, when struck by the opposite party, turning round on their assailants, and laughing quietly in their face: "You know," they used to say, "you dare not do this, if it were not for the elec-

stepped forward, and addressed them, in their own vehement and figurative language. Resolutions were next framed and proposed by priest, gentleman, and farmer, indiscriminately. The next day, they were struck off on small slips of paper, and on the following Sunday scattered to the amount of thousands in the neighbouring parish, previous to the assembly of the day. Shame and emulation are powerful stimulants. They are particularly so in Ireland, even in those portions of the country which are considered the most abandoned. The "Crusade," as it was denominated, worked its effect. It was soon a disgrace to be in the minority. The freeholder, in his own house, had an influence to contend with far more powerful than the influence of the demagogue, or of the priest. His wife and children were there, and sacrifices the most unheard of, were submitted to, rather than "demean them-

tion." Sometimes, when a violent opponent, John Claudius for instance, got into the midst of the crowd, they would open their ranks with a humorous affectation of civility, and allow him peaceably to pass on. They abstained from their habitual indulgence in spiritual liquors. At Clare this self-control was still more conspicuous. A freeholder asked for a glass of water: a priest was by, and poured a glass of spirits into it. The freeholder perceived it, and immediately emptied the glass at his feet.—"Arn't we sworn," said he, "and musn't we keep our troth?"

selves," as they said, "before all the county." Then it was that the ascendancy began seriously to awaken; but it was too late. The "Young Committee," as they contemptuously had called it, for not one of its members had been engaged in an election warfare before, had taken up all the vantage positions, and had already got possession of every approach to the camp. They began to imitate what they had at first despised, and to marshal for the battle, when it was now the time to fight.—It was too late. The victory was decided before the engagement had begun. In a few days the power of the intolerants was extinguished for ever.

Such were the wonder-workers in this singular contest, and such the tactics by which it was carried on. It was not the power of the priests, nor the power of the demagogues, but it was the power of common grievance—of common hatred—of common resistance, directed judiciously by the common efforts of priest and demagogue, to a practical and determinate result. The influence they possessed was solely in their being the reflection and expression of all this. The eloquence they used was in the people's heart, guiding the people the way they had determined to go; they were every thing; had

they opposed them, they would unquestionably have been nothing.

Once that the secret was discovered of the people's power, it was instantly felt, and applied in various parts of Ireland. Wexford had unfortunately its writ issued, and its election decided, before that of Waterford. It had submitted to the oligarchical influence of Lord Stopford : had it followed and not preceded the neighbouring county of Waterford, little doubt can exist that its energetic population would have easily found the means of emancipating themselves with equal celerity and success from their servitude. Louth, Monaghan, and Westmeath, followed, fought similar battles, and obtained similar triumphs ; Louth in particular was conspicuous. Like Waterford, it had long groaned under the joint mastery of the Jocelyns and Fosters, the relics of the old oligarchy, the Beresfords of that part of Ireland. The contest there, unlike that of Waterford, was a tumult ; the victory, a *coup de main*. It had peculiarities which still more strongly marked the popular indignation, and the popular will. Mr. Dawson, a retired barrister, with a small property in the county, was the candidate. He brought with him no splendours of ancient

name, like Mr. Stuart; no savings of a long minority; no recollections associated with the early history of the country. He stood simply on a warm devotion to popular rights—on the popular hatred to the dominion of these taskmasters. It was a matter of a few hours only; almost without deliberation; entirely without preparation: he appeared in the field, before his antagonist had even dreamt of the contest. His appeal was simple; unresisted; irresistible. The people believed themselves capable of every thing,—it was a great spell,—they were soon, in fact, what they believed themselves to be. The Jocelyn candidate was rejected by a vast majority; and so also would the Foster representative have been, had it been possible to have found a candidate to oppose him in proper time. But the triumph of the trampled people—of the despised Catholic freeholder—was not the less complete.* A new tone of thinking and of acting became general and familiar throughout all Ireland.—Confidence in an instrument which had now been fully proved; an habitual and well-organised combination; strict obedience to the laws; constitutional agitation,

* See a very interesting sketch of this celebrated struggle, too graphic not to have been written by an eye-witness, in the *New Monthly Magazine* for March and April, 1829.

henceforth became the code of the great confederacy of the Catholics. The patriot exulted at this glorious demonstration of the energies of men, who had so long been judged incapable of even the desire of freedom: the philosopher, rejoiced at the progress of sounder principles and the gradual substitution of moral influences for the coarse means of physical force; but, above all, the statesman already saw, in the events which had lately been passing before him, that a new course of policy would soon become inevitable, and that such agents and such agency, acting upon such bodies, must terminate speedily in restoring to Ireland its just franchises, or in plunging England into anarchy and confusion; and finally, perhaps, into utter ruin, without a hand to rescue her amongst other nations, or a heart to sympathise in her fall.

CHAP. IX.

Persecution of landlords—New Rent—Its effects and utility—Simultaneous Meetings—Continental sympathy—American sympathy—American addresses and associations, &c. alarming—American party in Ireland—Its principles—Its conduct—Results—Canning administration—His policy—His means—Wellington ministry—Marquess of Wellesley—Marquess of Anglesey.

THE triumphs of the Catholics were too important and too galling to the ascendancy, not to produce an immediate reaction. The elections were immediately followed by open war against the insurgents. Tenants were ejected without mercy; whole families turned out upon the high road; and recurrence had to every expedient of retaliation, which could most strongly mark the indignation and vengeance of the defeated party. The tenant, in many cases, lay particularly exposed to the severity of his landlord. In parts of Ireland, for instance, a small tenement was given to a peasant for a yearly rent sufficiently low to allow him the interest prescribed by law:

this rent was allowed to accumulate sometimes for thirteen or fourteen years successively, until it was utterly beyond the power of the freeholder to repay it. Where ejectment took place, the freeholder remained still liable for the debt, and was subjected by other process to imprisonment. In other cases the single life, sometimes nearly eighty or ninety years old, on which perhaps thirty or forty holdings depended, suddenly dropped, and a whole district became, at one blow, exposed to the cruelty of the village tyrant. These facilities to persecution were seized with avidity, and the immediate results of the election were of the most melancholy description. The breach between the parties was widened; new exasperations were added to the old; the priest was accused with the landlord; and the worst consequences, on all sides, were apprehended. It was dreaded, that once more the peasant would resume the rights of self-defence, and rush on to those acts of personal retaliation, which in all times had been so anxiously identified with the cause of the Catholics. It had produced the various coercive acts, with which the statute-book had formerly been crowded, and thrown the most serious obstacles in the way of emancipation. On the side of the freeholder, there were scarcely less

difficulties to contend with. The want of sympathy in the situation of men, to whom the late triumph had so pre-eminently been owing, would of all others have been the most certain means of deterring them in future from similar co-operation. A fund was proposed for their relief, and in a few weeks the "New Rent"* for the protection of the forty-shilling freeholders, poured in from every side into the coffers of the Association.

The result of this exertion was most perceptible. The freeholders not only were very speedily released, but they were taught to identify their interests, in a still more intimate manner, with the Association. They preferred personally their claims for redress, either to the Protecting Committees, as they were called, existing for that purpose in the contested counties, or to the clergy of the parish, or to the more popular leaders of the Association. They

* The creation of such a fund was first suggested at Dungarvan, in consequence of numerous applications from the clergy about two months before the Waterford election. It was then limited to a local subscription, and the promises of preference on vacant lands to such freeholders as might be ejected by their landlords for a conscientious discharge of their duty during the ensuing contest. Mr. O'Connell had the merit of making it really useful, by extending it to every part of Ireland.

were assured of having such petitions received with every due consideration by a body, which affected to proceed directly from the people, had encouraged them in the late struggle, and declared themselves the organ of their complaints, and the determined asserters of their violated rights. On the other side, the Association derived the most material advantage from this additional principle of union. The Rent, which flowed out upon the people, came back through the various channels doubled and quadrupled to the Association treasury. Like every other attempt to repress the advancement of the cause, the persecution of the landlords but added a new impetus to its progress. The landlords themselves at last admitted the justice of this assertion. They dropped off, one by one, from the unequal conflict, and came into terms of arrangement, through the intervention frequently of the priests, with their own tenants.* In some

* When this persecution in some instances had gone to the greatest extremes, it was suddenly stopped by the menace of purchasing up the outstanding judgments affecting the landlord, and wielding the same weapon which he had employed to persecute the freeholder, against himself. It is not meant to offer any defence of this species of domestic warfare; but it may be observed, that it arose out of the anomalous state in which all the relations of private as well as public life, were thrown by the laws, and the continuance of

cases, where ejectments had taken place, the tenants rather benefited than otherwise, by the arrangement. Several freeholds virtually fell into the hands of the Association, and the landlords abstained from any new registry of their tenants, with a declaration, that they had no intention in future of placing weapons in the hands of their enemies. All this tended to an obvious augmentation of the Catholic interest. The Catholics every where profited by the fears or apathy of their enemies. An active registry was commenced in the popular interest in Louth, Limerick, &c. &c. It no longer appeared doubtful that, with ordinary exertion, the Catholics would be enabled to return three-fourths of the representation of Ireland at the next ensuing General Election.

The necessity of presenting an annual petition from the Catholics of Ireland to parliament, and the policy of adding as much as possible to its weight, by similar petitions from the country, had suggested during the last year various expedients for the better arrangement of such petitions in the cities, counties, and parishes, of the kingdom. The secretary of the Catholics of each county was directed to send down to the parishes immediately under his control, the form which had been advocated, and prolonged by the very men who were now the first amongst its victims.

of such petitions, with blanks, for the insertion of their local grievances. These instructions in some instances had been complied with; but from various avocations interfering, from want of zeal and intelligence, or from other circumstances, very few of the parishes had received the proper forms in due time. This inconvenience demanded a remedy, and attracted the attention of Mr. Sheil. It occurred to him, that it would be of great utility to the cause, could petitions be had not only from every county and city, but from every parish in Ireland. The apathy and stupidity of the lower classes, their total indifference to emancipation, their ignorance of its very meaning, had been put forward very frequently, in both Houses of Parliament, as an irresistible argument against all concession.*

* These accusations have been made, not only by men hostile, but by men friendly to the Catholics, and well acquainted with Ireland. See *M'Nevin's and Emmett's examination by the secret committee of the Irish House of Commons in 1798*; but there were *then* grounds for the imputation which do not exist at *present*. The Irish people always felt their grievances, but did not trace them to their right causes. The Association, aided by the more general diffusion of knowledge in the present day, have given them the opportunity, and the means of judging more accurately. It was conferring a great blessing. Till this could be effected, the peasant always wasted his energies on secondary evils and secondary remedies. He felt that he was deprived of the

Late events had indeed contributed to render rather questionable the accuracy of such statements; but the force of the refutation might still be very considerably strengthened by an increased number of petitions being annually laid upon the tables of both Houses of Parliament. This was not to be done without system, and to the perfecting of this system Mr. Sheil applied himself.

But Mr. Sheil had other objects of much greater magnitude in view. The late elections had proved how easily the people could be acted on by their leaders. It was desirable

advantages of impartial justice, and immediately attacked the magistrate or the judge. So on through every other grievance. The Association first directed his attention from the individual to the system. It was not by burnings, or assassinations, or acts of local and immediate vengeance, he could hope for redress,—it was by the removal of that principle of inequality, which was the fertile source from which every injury and provocation had flowed. The Association laboured incessantly at this great moral revolution, and finally achieved it. It suppressed outrage and feud in eleven counties a little after its first establishment; and converted the energies of the very men most implicated in such proceedings, to the purposes of a common constitutional effort for the achievement of a common constitutional cause. Let the enemies of the Association remember this.—If it taught the people what Emancipation was, it taught them also the only true or legitimate means of acquiring it.

that this influence should be rendered as powerful, and as extensive as possible. It was scarcely less so, that it should be placed in a clear and striking point of view before all classes of the country. For this purpose, Mr. Sheil devised a very judicious expedient. He proposed that a meeting should be held, on the same day, in every parish in Ireland, for the purpose of petitioning parliament for the concession of their legitimate claims. The *simultaneous* character of these assemblies would draw closer (it was hoped) the bonds of union between every portion of the Catholic community, and give the most striking evidence of the unanimous soul—of the all-pervading influence of the Catholic Association. Mr. Sheil had suggested a somewhat similar measure in the earlier part of the year. He had brought forward a resolution, that the Catholic prelates should be requested to appoint a certain form of prayer, to be recited in the Catholic churches and chapels throughout the kingdom, praying that God would turn the heart of his Majesty's ministry to the just consideration of their condition; but this project (conceived it would appear in the same view as the simultaneous meetings, in order to produce a more perfect sense of union amongst the body) was ill calculated to effect its purpose. The Bishops were averse to such

interference, and the suggestion lent every facility to sneer and misinterpretation. The resolution was passed in the Association, but, as might be imagined, remained inoperative. It probably had no other merit than having led to the more matured measure of the "Simultaneous Meetings." The execution even of that project was encumbered with great difficulties. No government, it was to be supposed, would suffer tranquilly such a general assemblage of all the people. The Association itself would incur great risk and great responsibility in adventuring it. The reaction of the North, the general alarm of all Protestants, would more than counterbalance any advantages to which it might be supposed to lead. These objections, and many more, were obviated by a judicious expedient. The meetings were ordered to be held on an appointed Sunday, after mass, in every parish in the country; the form of the petitions was to be sent down by the Association, and when passed, were, without delay, to be transmitted back to the secretary. This arrangement was obvious and simple. The day was fixed by a resolution of the Association, and simultaneous meetings were held in every parish in Ireland.*

* "On the same day and at the same hour (21st January, 1828), meetings were held in upwards of fifteen hundred Catholic churches; and it has been calculated, on the pre-

Nothing occurred at any of those meetings which could in the slightest degree tend to violate the public peace. Every proceeding was conducted with perfect propriety and good order. But it must be conceded, that there was no great proof of Catholic enthusiasm, or Association influence, in the measure as it thus stood. It was obvious that it was the celebration of the mass, and not the proposal or passing of the petition, which had drawn the people together.—A petition too, read by the priest, and assented to by the congregation, was not exactly the truest expression which could be conceived of the popular will. But this is a short-sighted view of the subject. The principal point to be attained was, “to *habituate the people to obey, at a moment’s warning, the resolutions and commands of the Association.*” The Association would have been unwise *in limine* in attempting any thing which could tend to render doubtful this disposition. It gave orders easy to be complied with, and the facility of the execution of itself produced and confirmed the habit. The people did not examine very nar-

ruption of one thousand persons having attended each meeting (certainly a moderate average), that not less than ONE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PERSONS were *simultaneously* assembled for the same object on this impressive occasion.”—*Evening Post*.

rowly into the nature of the machinery employed; they attributed it exclusively to the will and power of the Association; and to the Association they began to look more and more every day for the direction of every particular of their conduct. The progress, though gradual, was most perceptible. There was no difficulty in assembling the people upon a SUNDAY.—This repeated, would have soon rendered it equally easy to have assembled them on a *week* day. Once such assemblies had become practicable, at the decree of the Association, the entire population of Ireland would be in its hands. What could have prevented it from making use of this power? It would have been a matter only of a piece of paper, and of four-and-twenty hours.*

Fortunately for the country, there existed no necessity during the late events for bringing this colossal but dangerous machinery into action; and it is much to the credit of the good sense

* The people met *without* arms, and for the peaceable purpose of *petitioning*: but they met at once,—they met on the same day,—above all, they met by the *order* of the Association. What if the Association at some later period had ordered them to meet *with* arms, for the purpose, not of *petitioning* against, but *resisting* tithes, &c. &c.;—would they have disobeyed? The fulcrum and the power were found—the lever could be applied to any thing.

and discretion of the leaders, that, conscious of the power which they held in their hands, they abstained from displaying it for mere purposes of boast or menace. They were satisfied with the quiet and secret progress of the influence, without risking its exhibition, on small or unnecessary occasions, before the public. In the management of such concerns, nothing is indifferent—what is not good, must necessarily be bad. This truth did not, it is true, always impress itself sufficiently on their minds, and many very injurious results have proceeded from its having been neglected. But in the present instance it was otherwise: the Association, content with having found an admirable secret, abstained from applying it in practice, until absolutely called for. The project, and the execution reflect high honour upon Mr. Sheil; it was one of those measures which might have had, under other circumstances, the most important influence on the destinies of the country.

Whilst Ireland was thus organising itself, with an order and discretion rarely witnessed in any country—going on from little to great, and gathering at every step a more implicit confidence in its union and resources,—its proceedings did not escape the attention and the sympathies of other countries. The French, stimulated by the progress of liberal institutions amongst them—

selves, and not a little perhaps by a lurking recollection of the injuries they had sustained from England, began to turn towards Ireland a large portion of their observation, and to hope from the discontents, allowed so unwisely to continue in that country, a new addition to the spirit of liberalism spreading throughout Europe, and an ample vengeance in due season, on the head of their haughty rival. The letters in the *Etoile*, the confidential and indeed official organ of the government,* the visit of two or three distinguished French travellers, the Duc de Montebello, Mons. Duvergier, the Marquis de Dalmatie, and others, and the publication of their travels on their return,—made a strong impression on the French mind.† Societies were

* It is now well known that the Letters, which were so much admired in the *Etoile*, and which for a moment created such an outcry and alarm in the English papers, were the production of a distinguished Catholic leader. The *Courier* on the discovery resumed courage, but their effect abroad was not diminished. This, after all, was the principal point.

† “ En Irlande,” says a late writer, “ on ne voit guères que des paysans plus malheureux que des sauvages. Seulement, au lieu d’être cent mille, comme ils seraient dans l’état de nature, ils sont huit millions, et font vivre richement cinq cents *absentees* à Londres et à Paris. Avec la religion payenne, ces pauvres diables auraient au moins joui d’un peu

projected in aid of the Catholic Association, both at Paris and Bordeaux, but the spirit was not yet sufficiently ripe to carry the project into prompt execution.* In Germany, and even in Italy, a similar feeling began to develop itself. The rapid translation of every thing connected with Ireland not only into French, but into both those languages, is a proof of the general interest, which its condition had begun to excite in the most remote parts of the Continent. Travellers brought home the same report. They were met every where, when they spoke of the glory of England, with taunts on the oppressions of Ireland. Every Englishman was made personally to feel the shame and disgrace which the tyranny of his own government had obtained for him abroad. The existing state of Europe was also favourable to this feeling. The late revolutions in Spain and Italy had disposed people to this train of thought, and the struggle

de bonheur." This is an abstract of the opinion of the Continent.

* The Association at Paris was to have embraced many of the "Liberals." It was to have been to France, what the Catholic Association was to Ireland, the generator and director of a most extensive organization. It was dispersed, much to the regret of many Frenchmen, by the King's speech.

in Greece, which still continued, furnished an example in courage and suffering, quite analogous to the struggle in Ireland. The Irish Catholic was assimilated in the popular imagination to the Christian Greek, and the English Protestant to his Turkish master. But there was another nation, whose interest in the situation of Ireland was of a far stronger, and more domestic character. America had been long the asylum of the suffering and expatriated Irish;—the country which of all others most keenly reflected the feelings, and understood the grievances of the Irish Catholic. The ties of consanguinity, the dearer ties of character and principle, the common recollection of former oppression, the remembrance of ancient communion and of ancient resistance to wrong:—all these feelings not only preserved, but enhanced, by the contrast between their former and their present situation, between Irish servitude and American liberty, directed their attention at a very early period to their injured brethren on the other side of the Atlantic.* In the year

* It is calculated that nearly one half of the annual arrivals in the United States are Irish. Many of these are from Canada. The change from Ireland to Canada, if we are to judge from the letters of individuals, and the Report on the State of Ireland in 1825, is felt to be a change from a state

1825, a general meeting was held at New York, Judge Swanton in the chair. Resolutions, and an address from the eloquent pen of Dr. M'Nevin to the people of Ireland, were unanimously voted. Some of these resolutions are very remarkable. They profess to have for their object, "the giving efficient expression to their sympathy for the oppressed, and their indignation at the conduct of their oppressors." For this purpose a co-operating Association, modelled with great skill on the plan of the Catholic Association, and a "Rent" similar to that collected in Ireland, under the direction of this body, and the auspices of the state government, were immediately established. The ad-

of bondage to a state of comparative liberty. The comparison is continued: the Irishman, wishing still farther to improve his moral and physical condition, makes no difficulty in emigrating to the Union. The ultimate effects on our settlements, of this emigration and transit of Irish, may be separation. It may be doubtful, whether the emigration *en masse*, which Mr. Wilmot Horton recommends, might not (if effected) considerably tend to accelerate this rupture. At all events, it can only be retarded. Sooner or later, the colony must become an independent country. She is ripening for it daily, and England is hurrying her to it by her indifference and impolicy. "Nations," says Mr. Grattan, "have neither a parent's nor a child's affection: like the eagle, they dismiss their young, and know them no longer."

dress was in a bold and impassioned tone, and was received in Ireland with sentiments of surprise and gratitude; but it ventured into topics which had no immediate reference to the existing state of Irish politics, and contained principles which, however just in the abstract, appeared to be misplaced at the moment, or at least calculated to embarrass, and to alarm. A very interesting discussion, on the motion of a vote of thanks, by Mr. Stephen Coppinger (who perseveringly continued to encourage this connexion with America), terminated at last in a modified expression of the public gratitude; it excluded every opinion on the principles of the address; but, in a marked manner, declared how deeply sensible the Catholics of Ireland felt at the sympathy expressed in their degradation by free American citizens. The impression which this event made in Ireland at the time was slight: but Mr. Coppinger judged well; it was the forerunner of important consequences. The organization, once commenced, diffused itself over various parts of the United States, with a celerity which had been little calculated on, on this side of the Atlantic. Meetings similar to that of New York took place at Washington, Augusta, Boston, &c. Addresses were voted in all those

places to the Catholics of Ireland, differing in tone, and repressing the expression of the opinions which had marked the first address from New York, but all full of the most anxious interest, and the most heartfelt concern in the grievances and calamities of this unfortunate country. Associations sprung up, with branch associations spreading off from them, in every direction : the Rent was every where put into a course of collection, and a most active correspondence opened, between each of these societies, and the Catholic Association of Ireland. Every week new evidences of their zeal poured in, from the most distant and separated parts of the Union ; and the signatures to the addresses, and the increasing amount of Rent which accompanied them, gave better proof than the addresses themselves of the spirit of indignation which pervaded all classes of the American community. In a little time, it was highly probable that these co-operating bodies would extend themselves to every part of that vast republic. But two years after their first establishment in New York, they had already begun to start up amongst the liberated states of South America. Irishmen had emigrated in that direction also, and had brought with them the burning sense of accumulated injury

—the liveliest desire of retaliation,—a deep and solid detestation of the very name—of the very thought, of England. A great and new spectacle now opened on all sides, and the opportunity of giving active and effective expression to these feelings was seized with most extraordinary anxiety. Similar contributions were transmitted from Newfoundland, from Nova Scotia, and from various other portions of the British settlements. There was thus a long line of communication established from North to South, throughout the whole of this mighty continent, all tending to the same end, all using the same means,—all co-operating in applying them, with the same energy, to the liberation of Ireland. The American papers were filled with the subject. Ireland often formed their heading article. The debates of their Associations were given with the same punctuality, and read with an earnestness scarcely inferior to that, which generally attended the proceedings of the Catholic Association of Ireland. The entire people became kindled by the subject, and every day the conclusions to which it tended were more and more perceptible. The last document from that country (it arrived in Ireland but a short time after the dissolution of the Association) states, that in every hamlet

in the land similar bodies were ere long to be established, and that delegates of the friends of Ireland (it was thus the Philhellènes preluded to the liberation of Greece) were to assemble in general congress from all parts of the Union at Washington, there to consider, and devise the best means of assisting the efforts making in this country for Emancipation. The exertions of individuals were favoured by the government : the local authorities often presided ; and it has been stated on the best information, within these last few days, that the President himself, General Jackson,* had just expressed his intention

* General Jackson is the son of an Irishman, and has more than once been opposed to the English. His military talents are well known. We have not yet forgotten New Orleans. Whether his hostility to this country be as marked as it is generally represented, may admit of some doubt ; but it is obvious he is not the man to offer any opposition to a feeling, which in a short time would probably have become the feeling of all America. It is said, that the statues injured by General Ross are still preserved in the same mutilated state in which he left them, in order constantly to remind the Americans of the debt of vengeance which they owe their country. Such men, with such recollections, must be but too well inclined to avail themselves of every opportunity which may offer, to wound England through the side of Ireland. Had not a better policy at last prevailed, such an opportunity would not have been long delayed.

of subscribing the first thousand dollars to the patriotic fund.

Little doubt can exist, that if this sort of collateral or accompanying organization in America had been suffered to proceed, and thus to spread itself over every part of the States, the most alarming, and perhaps the most fatal consequences, might have ultimately resulted to this country. The suppression of the Association in Ireland (even if practicable), in such a state of things, would literally have effected nothing. No English statute could have travelled to the other side of the Atlantic; the exasperation produced by so arbitrary an act, on the temper of the Irish Catholics, would in an instant have communicated itself to their brethren in America. Indignation, legitimate indignation, would have added new fuel to their zeal: the Associations would of course have increased: their funds would have augmented; and a spirit very different from the spirit which now exists, would very probably have directed their future application. To prevent the introduction of such sums into Ireland would of course have been utterly impossible. They might have been lodged in the name of Mr. O'Connell, or in the name of any other individual, in the American, French, or English funds. Such a government as ours,

so vitally dependent on its commercial honour,* could not dare to interfere with private property, and would thus have been compelled to witness the existence of such resources, without having it in its power to restrict or prevent their application. Nor would this have been the whole of the evil. It must be remembered, that America is now a very different power, from what she was at the period of the last rebellion. Her connexion and sympathy with Ireland are infinitely closer. The survivors of that eventful period occupy some of the highest stations in her government. They cannot be supposed to have lost much of their old antipathies. They have long watched with anxiety every chance of retaliation. They have the will, and would not have been long, under such circumstances, without the means to effect it. They would have found in Ireland a most powerful co-operation. The delay of emancipation on the one side, and the habit of discussion on every topic connected with government (generated by the debates on the Catholic question) on the other, had produced views incompatible with the connexion in the mind of a large body of the population. Many be-

* The saying which has been ascribed to Pitt, has been at all times the governing principle of commercial England.

gan to adopt a tone of thinking quite in harmony with the first addresses from America. They began to consider even Catholic emancipation but a very partial remedy for the political and moral evils of Ireland. They looked to a regeneration far more sweeping and decisive : they believed that Ireland had outgrown the connexion, and could now set up for herself. Reasoning on past experience, they were disposed to treat with distrust and contempt all overtures from England. They had in history proof that she had never made concessions to Ireland, except upon compulsion. They looked only to such a crisis as might, by its appalling force, loose the iron grasp altogether, and liberate the country for ever from its dependence. They laughed at any thing less than self-government in its amplest sense ;—separation, and republicanism were the two head articles of their political creed. Such a party has within these last three years been rapidly increasing in Ireland ; far more formidable than the French party which haunted the imagination of Mr. Grattan, and which he so often denounced in parliament ;—it based its projects, not on the fanciful theories of the French revolutionists, but on the practical model which it saw in America, expanding to a greater maturity and

vigour every day before them.* They compared the resources, the advantages, the population, the energies, the intelligence, of the two countries, —they opposed the oppression and wretched-

* What Mr. Grattan said of this French party in 1793, of the causes which produced it, of the motives and principles which directed it, is not altogether inapplicable to the opinions and persons before us. “They have done this on a surmise, the statement of which would excite our scorn, if its consequences did not produce our apprehensions, that men believing in the real presence cannot be well affected to the house of Hanover; they have urged this, when the Pretender was extinct, when the power of the Pope was extinct, and when the sting of the Catholic faith was drawn; they have done this, when a new enthusiasm had gone forth in the place of religion, much more adverse to kings than Popery, and infinitely more prevailing—the spirit of republicanism. At such a time, they have chosen to make the Catholics outcasts of a Protestant monarchy, and leave them no option but a republic: such a policy and such argument tend to make Irish Catholics French republicans; they aid the cause of proselytism against the cause of kings; they would drive the Roman Catholics from the hustings, where they might vote without danger, and would send them to plant the tree of liberty on their own hills, where treason, foreign and domestic, may intrigue in a body, kept vacant for all the floating poison of the times to catch and propagate a school for the discontents of both countries and the foreign emissaries, who need not bring any other manifesto than your own code and your own resolutions.”—*Report of Debates of 1793 on the Bill for the Relief of his Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects*, p. 255.

ness of one, to the freedom and prosperity of the other: they calculated that there was no other emancipation for Ireland than the absolute assertion of her independence, and that the attempt, if conducted with ordinary prudence and perseverance, quietly husbanding and augmenting their forces, and awaiting with patience the propitious and certain hour for the experiment, could not ultimately fail of the most entire success. The evidences of the existence of such a body were not very striking: accordingly they have escaped both in parliament and out of parliament any direct animadversion; as a distinct party in the state, they do not exist. They are not bound together by any series of concerted measures, tending to any specific purpose, nor have they ever come forward in a collected form to the observation of the Catholic or Protestant public. But there are other bonds, far stronger than resolutions, and votes in public meetings: there is an identity of reasoning, and an identity of feeling, which has been gradually growing up amongst them, unperceived to themselves, not less than to others, and which requires only some great and peculiar occasion to produce an instant coalition, the most formidable perhaps of any which has yet been witnessed in Ireland. This identity, by an attentive observer, may be traced through many of their public speeches;

but a much better proof of its existence may be found in the frankness and fervour of familiar conversation. Amongst the inhabitants of the large commercial towns, particularly amongst the tradesmen, amongst the younger members of the bar, and even of the church, its principles are to be met with in full vigour. From any express declaration of their sentiments they have cautiously abstained : but they have favoured every measure, which could in any way tend to give larger views to the Catholic community, or direct their attention to other grievances, besides those, under which they especially and specifically laboured. Hence, instead of confining themselves to mere relief from the penal laws, they attacked the church ; they attacked the corruptions of parliament ; they attacked the unfeeling pride of the aristocracy ; they attacked the Sub-letting and other bills ; and as often as an opportunity admitted, under the question of the repeal of the Union, they went so far, as to attack the connexion with England itself. Many persons of leading influence advocated these same questions, with much more limited intentions, and from an impression that they might, in an indirect manner, advance the great measure, by enlisting the sympathies of all parties in the country in its progress and success. Whether they reasoned rightly in this

particular or not, may admit of some doubt, but their object was clear and palpable, and did not step beyond the ordinary policy of the body. Not so the party of which I am speaking: they took advantage of the discussion, which such questions raised, to propagate their own particular principles. They flattered, in an especial manner, that natural pride of all countries, the love of self-legislation and self-rule; and appealed to passions and to prejudices which had slept, it is true, but had never been thoroughly extinguished in the public mind. The infusion of the vigour and intrepidity of this party, bordering as it frequently did on violence and indiscretion, was not without its use; but an experienced eye might easily discern that the very nature of such qualities would not allow them to stop where they were. Every day more visible proofs were produced of a coming internal revolution in the Catholic body, which would sooner or later lead to the most decisive consequences. It was no longer a contest for the first place in a small debating society, such as the Catholic Committee had formerly been, but for the command and control, without much exaggeration, of no inconsiderable nation. This supremacy was worth ambition; it was worth seeking: it would unquestionably, had the struggle

been prolonged, given rise to the most dangerous and disastrous rivalries. The violent party would ultimately have triumphed over the moderate: the American would have gained the ascendancy over the British. This is in the very nature of things. The appetite grows by what it feeds on, and what at an earlier period had appeared a stimulant of the greatest energy, would have been shortly thrown by as comparatively weak and insipid. This had hitherto been the progress of Catholic affairs: there was no reason why it should not continue to be so in future. Compare O'Connell with John Keogh, and John Keogh with Lord Trimleston, &c. There were already indications every day mounting to the surface, which left no doubt of the full and rapid development of these dangerous elements. O'Connell, who had set out with exciting, was in the latter period of the struggle frequently obliged to moderate, and to allay. This moderation was not the effect of a change in the man, but it was the effect of a change in the men around him. The interposition for a time would doubtless have been regarded. Past services, great experience, habitual command, and numerous adherents, bound by personal as well as public ties, would have, for a long period, assured to him the full enjoyment of his ancient

supremacy. But it is not to be concealed, that that supremacy would soon have declined, without an entire acquiescence in the more vehement propositions of his competitors. Such propositions, as in the commencement of the French revolution, would have been put forward with no other object than to compromise the leader before the people, or the demagogue before the government; and in either case, the proposers would have equally gained. The opposition to their measures would have furnished grounds for impeachment before the multitude, with whom such men, from the very nature of their principles, would soon have become the favourites; or, had he allowed himself to make the base compromise of principle to popularity, they would have gained by the accession of his name and influence the strongest support to their own cause. Any man who has observed the late proceedings of the Catholic Association, with impartiality, cannot have avoided perceiving that such a contest *had actually commenced*: where it would have terminated, may well baffle the speculations of the most sagacious. Reasoning from analogy, it is more than probable that they would ultimately have succeeded in their efforts, and obtained the lead. The consequences are easily to be imagined. They would have be-

come masters of an enormous fund, accumulated from all parts of the New world, and secured beyond the reach of British law: they would have acquired active and intelligent allies, not less secure than the fund itself from the visitations of British justice, in every American who had contributed to it: they would have had in Ireland a highly inflamed population at their beck (for the man who wielded the Association in a popular crisis, would assuredly be enabled to wield the country); and they would, above all, have been under the absolute necessity of surpassing their professions in their conduct, and going on from violence to violence, to the very verge of national revolution. Once on the edge of the precipice, whether they should plunge in or not, would be no longer in their choice. It would entirely depend upon the force by which they were propelled forward. It would depend upon the men behind them. A rebellion would be inevitable. It would not be in human power to prevent it. The conclusion of such a conquest would at least be *doubtful*. No reasonings from former struggles would hold. An entire nation would have become engaged; and a powerful nation would be the encourager, and the ally behind it. Ireland would by steam be brought into immediate contact with

America ; no navy could guard an entire coast ; and unless the entire were guarded, it would be of little importance whether it were guarded at all. The influence of all good men, in such a conflict, would be totally set at nought. Association, clergy, leaders, would be all carried away in the general commotion. They would have no choice but to follow : if they attempted to resist the torrent, the torrent would sweep over them. From such a danger, no other possible mode of security could be discovered than the concession, *in time*, of all just claims of the Roman Catholics. Even as it is, it may well be doubted whether there has not been already too much *delay*. The delay has created a feeling of discontent and speculation ; and this speculation a spirit of *republicanism*, which otherwise, perhaps, would never have existed. It was not to the old principle of Catholic domination the late debaters in either house should have adverted ; not to the anathemas of popes, nor to the interdicts and bans of councils, nor to the burnings of inquisitions, all of which have passed away with tournaments, witches, and coats of armour ; but to this existing, living, augmenting evil, throwing up its fiery gusts from the volcano immediately under their feet. Had things gone on in the state in which they

were, it is quite certain the great mass of the Catholics, at no distant period, would scarcely have thought it worth their while to have continued asking any longer, for what had been so long and so punctiliously refused them. Even as it is, there are many men at this moment, either indifferent or altogether disappointed, at Catholic emancipation. No one measure has tended so decidedly to put the seal to the union of the two countries, or to annihilate, or at least retard, all chance and desire of a national separation.

It was in the midst of these daily evidences of the progress of the cause abroad, that a great public event at home seemed to have abruptly opened the doors of the constitution. The sudden illness of Lord Liverpool produced an immediate change in the cabinet, of which he had been so long the ostensible Premier. The Whigs were again excluded from office, less perhaps from any dislike on the part of the sovereign, or want of adequate support on the part of the people, than from the growing liberality and Whiggism of their opponents. The tactics of administration had been gradually changed, and they foiled their adversaries, not so much by an uncompromising adherence to the old Tory principles, as by an implicit adoption of almost every

amelioration which it had been the glory of the Whigs originally to have introduced. A sort of amalgamation of the two parties took place, and Mr. Canning, after some difficulty, succeeded to the vacant Premiership. The hopes of the Catholics were now raised to the utmost. They had every assurance of the liberal nature of the principles of Mr. Canning, and doubted not that his means were quite commensurate to his will. The Irish have never appeared fully sensible of the innumerable obstacles which have, at all times, existed in every class of English society to the adjustment of their question. In all political arrangements, men are much more to be looked to than measures;—a consideration which altogether escaped the Irish Catholics, who, satisfied with the intrinsic merits of their case, paid no regard to the prejudices or views of individuals.* The thousand modes in which the question has been discussed, are proofs how very various are the motives which produced and guided the opposition to its settlement. If the

* If any thing can enhance the great merit of the Duke of Wellington and his colleagues, it is the having dared to anticipate the slow change of these prejudices amongst the people. He has made them happy in despite of themselves. "Genius of a high and commanding order," says Schiller, "guides the future, rather than follows the past."

Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, commanding the forces of both camps, found the consummation of the measure a task quite equal to their superior advantages, it cannot be a matter of much surprise that Mr. Canning should have found it a subject demanding the most delicate consideration and management. It is a very doubtful question whether, with all the array of his splendid talents, he could have achieved for many years the results which we are at present witnessing. He had marshalled against him, not only the usual opponents to concession, but a large mass of personal hostility and aristocratic prejudice in the Upper House, provoked by the elevation of a commoner, of comparatively plebeian origin, to the first office in the empire. Had Mr. Canning lived, the cause unquestionably would have gained a new impulse ; but it is very possible no attempt would have been made at a final adjustment until every attempt would have been too late. His death saved him from this mortification ; for mortification it surely would have been. He would have had to stand in the false position of mediator between two parties, neither of whom would have finally trusted him, and probably would have fallen, in the fullest confidence of integrity and intellect, between the attacks and distrusts of both.

But he anticipated his fate. Whether it was too deep an apprehension of the difficulties of his situation, or too keen a sensitiveness to the faithlessness of former friends, he sunk in the meridian of his glory, not by visible and gradual decline, but without warning, and at once. The Catholics took his intentions for deeds, and lamented over his tomb, as if he had been their deliverer. Their grief was great—their despondency greater. Lord Goderich seized the reins for an instant: they were too heavy, and he let them fall,—the Duke of Wellington stepped in, grasped them with a firmer hand,—and kept them.

But before the country had been deprived of Mr. Canning, he made a present, it might almost be called a legacy, of inestimable value to Ireland. He appointed the Marquess of Anglesey Lord-Lieutenant, and thus did more for the liberation of that country than had been accomplished or attempted by all the Prime Ministers before him. From that day forth a new era opened for the country. The proximate causes of the great measure had commenced. The Catholics knew not at first the importance of the gift they had received, but a few months were sufficient to discover it.

The Marquess of Wellesley retired from the

administration without any marked testimony of the approbation of either party. This is easily accounted for. He had displeased one, and had not had time to conciliate the other. This was inseparable from his situation, and the period at which he was placed in the government. He had succeeded to an inveterate system of misrule. He formed the link or rather the transition from one mode of governing to the other. He was proportionably incumbered with difficulties. The first alterations took place in the change of the machinery. Justice was rendered less factious and less partisan. A gradual elimination of the intractable and obstinate instruments of former administrations was attempted and achieved. This was much: the links were weakened, but the chain had not yet been broken asunder. For this, time was as requisite as skill; the best intentions were often foiled by apparently the most trifling obstacles. Habits of business, acquaintance with those minor details of practice, which, however contemptible in themselves, are yet essential to the just movement of all governments, gave a factitious importance to the subalterns of the Irish administration. It was impossible to move them from their situations in mass; they knew it; and removing them in part, alarmed, without extin-

guishing them. Hence the *maire du palais* system on a miserable provincial scale was still enacted. The Viceroy was a mere *roi fainéant*, in the most degrading sense of the word, not only without the reality of power, but often without its shadow; scarcely more than an under-secretary of the Home Office, and at the same time exposed to the unceasing surveillance and conspiracy of the very servants who were acting under him. The Government patronised and protected the informers; the informers multiplied under the fostering influence of the Government. The Marquess felt the difficulty of this position: contended against it feebly; of course failed; and was compelled, or was contented to submit.* He did good, but he was

* This is to be taken with qualifications. The Marquess went to Ireland, on the understanding that he was to be allowed to govern with impartiality, that is, that the Catholics were to be allowed the full advantages of all such honours and franchises as they were actually eligible to. At the same time he fully acquiesced in the principle of half measures, and letting things be, for the present, as they were. The very strong objections to concession in a high quarter, and the heterogeneous composition of the cabinet, undoubtedly rendered it very doubtful whether a more open and decided policy would not have been productive of more mischief than good. Lord Wellesley as often acted on principle as on compulsion: but Lord Liverpool ought to have been more candid.

obliged to do it, almost by stealth : at home he had to ask the permission of inferiors ; abroad, to encounter the misinterpretation of his friends. A government so veering between good and bad, could not in the nature of things satisfy *either* party. The Protestants scoffed and sneered at the impotent attempts at liberality. The Catholics, smarting under actual grievance, would make no allowance for mere intentions. They could not look within, and were not sufficiently aware of the doubtful battle which was going on between "the two principles" in the cabinet itself. The contest they waged with government the government literally waged with its own strength. It was said indeed, that there were peculiarities of a domestic as well as public nature in the situation of his Excellency, which very considerably enhanced these difficulties. But the true source of these vices was not in the man, but in the administration itself. It was the sudden effort then making to a better system which shook and disordered the whole frame. The crisis had arrived, and with it all its anxiety and inflammation. It is now only that the value of his Viceroyalty is fully understood. The commencements were small and insignificant ; but it was much indeed to have made a commencement.*

* The Secretary, generally speaking, down to the Marquess of Anglesey's government, had constituted the entire

The Marquess of Wellesley was succeeded by a nobleman his opposite in very many particulars. Frank, firm, generous, educated in camps, and unbiassed by the pernicious intrigues, and the narrow views of cabinets, he came to Ireland, not as the servant of any party, but as the impartial guardian of the rights of all, resolved to sacrifice every thing to justice, and to rule for the good of the entire nation, and not in the sense, or for the monopoly of any of the wretched factions which continued to distract it. His feelings were not adverse, but not in favour of the country: he was open to conviction: he was anxious for information: * he was

power and government; the Viceroy, the mere decoration and pageant of Irish administration. The Under-Secretary often ruled the Secretary with as much despotism as the Secretary ruled the Lord Lieutenant. But every thing in Ireland was studiously inverted. This was only the first illustration of a system, which almost reached down to the cabin door.

* Lord Anglesey's opinions at an early period were favourable to Emancipation. He vacated his seat in Parliament in 1803, when Mr. Pitt went out of office, in consequence of the obstacles he met with in his attempt to bring forward the measure. Subsequently he opposed concession, from a misapprehension (natural under the circumstances) of the conduct and intentions of the Catholic leaders. But previous to his departure for Ireland, he had taken the utmost pains minutely to inform himself of the real state of

desirous of making up opinions for himself, and not of taking them second-hand, as had hitherto been the case, from the false reporters who stood between the country and the Castle. A few short months of inquiry from all parties, of fair and honest observation, with no object but the discovery of truth upon all sides, laid open to his calm and clear mind the real malady of the country. He was not a man to stop at secondary symptoms: he went to the internal seat of the disease: he probed it, he proved it, and had the courage to point it out, and to press it again and again upon those, in whose hands lay the certain and immediate cure. No praise can be too high for this species of moral chivalry: it is the noblest conflict in which a high-minded and

Ireland. His inquiries were not confined to one party. He consulted not only the ministry who had appointed him, but the Liberals and Whigs to whom he had been opposed. A sort of domestic or friendly committee (if it can so be called), of the most distinguished political characters of the day, sate upon the subject. He listened,—he treasured up,—he planned for himself, a rule of future conduct. That no mistake should possibly occur, he had interviews with Lord Wellington, and subsequently with his Majesty. His intentions of governing in a sense very different from those who had preceded him, were frankly and warmly avowed. In these intentions he left England. He was not long in Ireland before he realised them.

honourable nature can be engaged : the victory was well worthy of the contest ; it is the highest which a citizen can enjoy, or a patriot could have conferred. Ireland required such a man. He was the first viceroy who, since Lord Fitzwilliam, seems to have fully understood her character, and devoted himself with real and heartfelt earnestness, to her cause. By far too many of her former rulers reasoned and felt about her, as about a country whose sole utility was, the providing them with the means of bettering or retrieving their fortunes. They came to plunder, or to economise ; gathered up their vintage, and then, like the inhabitants of Naples, turned away from the sides of the volcano. But the Marquess of Anglesey thought of the country first, and of himself last,—this, and this only, was the secret of his power. No man ever ruled Ireland so completely, yet he ruled her with a silken thread. He seized fully the national heart, and after that, every thing was easy. Mutual esteem, mutual attachment, was the bond : he was the best servant at the same time of the sovereign, and the most popular leader of the people.

The first mention of his name in Ireland excited a momentary triumph on one side and the deepest despondency on the other. The false

report of a few unfavourable expressions in Parliament had sunk deep into the Catholic heart. It was some time before they could be prevailed on to forgive him. But as they mutually approached each other, both saw, both repented, and both forgave their mutual distrusts. Every act of his government tended more powerfully to cement this union. We shall see later, with what cool and kindly persuasion, in times beyond comparison the most difficult since the period of 1798, he brought over the country to its own good. We shall see how he stood between all parties, tempering and staying all: how he enlightened the cabinet, and how he tranquillised the people: how he actually did what Lord Fitzwilliam wished to do: how he had the courage and the wisdom to give, all that a lord-lieutenant was permitted to give, for the liberation and pacification of the country.

CHAP. X.

Churchwardens—Liberal Clubs—Brunswick Clubs—How composed—State of parties—Clare Election—Mission of Mr. Lawless to the North—Reconciliation meetings, &c. in the South—The Army—Exclusive Dealing, &c.

THE apprehensions which were at first entertained of the Marquess of Anglesey's hostility to the Catholics and their cause, were soon dissipated. The Association was not suppressed: the country was not kindled by coercive statutes: "the rebellion was not made to explode:" discussion was allowed to proceed; and the people to advance in their peaceable course of constitutional agitation, to the complete restoration of their rights.

It may have been observed by the reader, that the greater proportion of the late measures of the Association were chiefly directed towards the improving into a more complete system of organization, the spirit which now had been so

universally roused in the Catholic body. But frequent interruptions and deficiencies were still observable, calling for the active and judicious interference of the leaders. The Rent still continued to be partially collected; and though the country had been repeatedly promised, in the opening of the budget of each year, that 50,000*l.* could with certainty be counted upon, the deficit still remained unredeemed, and no measures yet adopted had provided for the evil either an adequate, or permanent cure. These deficiencies, too, had not originated from the people themselves: whenever they were called upon by their clergy, or the members of the Association, or the principal landholders of the parish, the people on all occasions evinced a zeal, which outstript the most sanguine anticipations. But the system was radically bad: it had been left too much to the option and guidance of individuals: in some parishes it had been collected with great regularity for months; in others not at all. This unequal distribution produced two evils; the unjust application of the burden to one portion of the community, and the interruption of that chain of communication, which, to be thoroughly effective, ought to have extended from one extremity of the country to the other. The Census was equally

neglected, or imperfect. Waterford, at an early period, had been carefully and minutely investigated. Dr. Kelly, with his characteristic activity and intelligence, had immediately directed his instructions to every clergyman in his diocese; and was, I believe, the first prelate who presented a complete census of the population to the Association. But his example had not been followed with equal zeal in other parts of Ireland. By far the greater number of the dioceses lay still unexamined; and the parish Census, which had been handed in from time to time, did not furnish sufficient data to form any correct or generalised opinion of the Catholic statistics of Ireland. There was another object, which, of late, had not sufficiently occupied the attention of the Catholic Association. The interests of Catholic education had been passed over, in the larger and more engrossing interests of the body. The Kildare Place establishments had extended, and in many places had succeeded in introducing, that spirit of proselytism, which now was openly avowed in the most remote parts of the country. Irish teachers had been employed by the Biblicals, and controversy brought down, with all its multitudinous evils, to the peasant's hearth. It was a matter of great interest to the Catholic Associa-

tion to ascertain the extent and progress of this system. They could not with propriety apply to the clergyman of the parish, occupied as he necessarily must be with numerous and more important duties, for information, upon all these heads; and little expectation of regular communication could be entertained, from the secretaries of counties, or the usual members of the Rent committees. Mr. O'Connell, with great sagacity, undertook to remedy these evils, and proposed, for the adoption of the Association, an excellent arrangement, perfectly well calculated to meet all difficulties. He suggested the immediate appointment of two Catholic churchwardens in each parish, to be selected from the resident parishioners (the tradesmen, intelligent farmers, &c., to be preferred), one to be in the appointment of the parish priest, the other to be elected in vestry, by the parish. The duties of these officers were then traced out. They were required to furnish short monthly reports, after a formula, extremely simple and concise, sent down to them by the Association, of the progress of the Rent, the Census, the amount of the tithes, the church cess, &c., the establishment of Kildare Place schools, the progress of proselytism, in their respective neighbourhood, &c. &c. The freeholders still continued

to be ejected from their holdings, and otherwise persecuted, in several of the lately contested counties. The Churchwardens were commissioned to make every due inquiry into such persecution, and to report the same, in gross (leaving the details to the clergyman or the freeholder himself), in his monthly return to the Association. To give greater extension to the proceedings of the Association, they were farther employed with great judgment, as vehicles for the circulation of the public papers. A Weekly Register was sent down to each of the Churchwardens, every Saturday, containing the amplest report of the speeches and resolutions of the Tuesday and Thursday meetings of the Association. They were not intended for their own exclusive use, but for such of the parishioners also as might be sufficiently educated to read them. On Sunday they were read aloud at the chapel door, and then filed by the Churchwardens. It is quite incredible the anxiety for political information which this diffusion of the public prints generated in every part of Ireland.* The entire public gaze became in-

* The newspaper stamps in 1818 amounted to 19,080; in 1827, to 25,452. Yet the number of papers circulated is by no means commensurate with the wants of the people of Ireland.


stantly fixed on every measure of the Association; the debates of parliament were passed over: the only parliament which the people seemed to recognise, the only names with which their feelings were associated, were the Parliament, and names of the Catholic Association. For weeks afterwards, passages of those speeches could be heard, accompanied with the shrewdest comments from the mouth of the humblest peasant in the country: these were the commencements: the system, as we shall see later, was in a very short time perfected. A little before the dissolution of the body, the number of copies of the Weekly Register sent to the country amounted to six thousand. The nation had become a nation of politicians: not a single chapel which had not its lecturer, not a single lecturer which had not thousands for his audience.

The reports, in proportion as they came in, were arranged, circulated, and preserved for future reference, by the Secretary of the Churchwardens, Mr. Maurice O'Connell; and every hope was entertained that in a few years they would not only have furnished a complete body of information, but trained the people to the keenest habits of political observation. On the side of the Association, the advantages were

scarcely less considerable. It gave the body the most certain and immediate mode, which had yet been adopted, of communication with every part of the country, and very greatly advanced that system of combination, which had been the chief object of the institution of the Rent,—the Census,—and the Simultaneous Meetings. It was more peaceable, and less ostentatious, but perhaps not less effective, than any of those measures, and added new claims to the very many which Mr. O'Connell's services had already had upon the gratitude of the country.

But, it was observed, when these officers came to act, a great deal too much was confided to one person, and the country was too dependent upon the zeal of an individual for its advancement. In some parishes no elections took place—in others they were delayed—in others the authority confided to their hands was exercised with too little moderation, and was finally rejected by a portion, or the entire of the parishioners. Interruptions of course followed, &c. &c. But these were not evils of such magnitude, as to require the addition or substitution of new machinery. The additions which were subsequently made, originated from a different principle. The late elections, combined with the proceedings of the Association, had gene-

rated in the most distant districts the desire of attacking not only those greater wrongs, which weighed with the same pressure on the entire community, but those minor, but far more bitter evils, which affected the local relations of each citizen, and came close, in the transactions of every day, to his own hearth and home. To watch these comparatively domestic oppressions, and to devise means for their redress, was not always in the power of a body whose sittings were held at a distance, and whose views were necessarily too ample and too national, to take in the especial grievances of each particular town. It occurred to Mr. Wyse that no more efficient remedy for these wants could for the present be imagined, than the institution of such local or county associations, as might, by compressing into a narrower focus all the local knowledge, vigour, and patriotism of each particular place, and directing them against those abuses, more immediately tend to weaken the system in all its several parts, and bring home to every anti-Catholic in the country the pressing and personal conviction, that "something must be done, and that things could no longer be permitted to remain as they were." But this was but a small portion of the objects which Mr. Wyse had in view. He was sensible, that the institu-



tion of such separate and local bodies, each apparently with its independent and distinct jurisdiction, might interfere with the simple and comprehensive authority of the Association. He obviated this inconvenience, and extended to the project a more ample and national character. There were great defects in the actual organization of the Association, as far as order and symmetry, just connexion and perfect subordination of parts, were concerned. He suggested the establishment of a new arrangement for the entire system. 1st. That the Association should continue the Head club, committee, or association : 2dly. That in each county there should be established a similar association or club, under the immediate control of the Association : 3dly. That in each parish there should be formed a similar club or association, under the immediate control of the county club,—thus rising by just gradations, chain linked within chain, from a group of peasants in the lowest hamlet in the land, until at last it terminated in the full assembly of the Catholic Association. The Parish Clubs were organised with a just reference to the objects and character of the persons who were intended to compose them. They were formed of the gentry, the clergymen, the reading farmers (for

reading was a necessary condition for admission), resident in each parish. The subscription was trifling, sufficient to pay for a weekly paper; they elected their own officers, president, secretary, treasurer, and were committed to the control and guidance of the Secretary of the County Club. The greater part of the clergymen and gentlemen were again members of the County Club; and these represented the wishes and feelings of their respective parishes. Finally, most members of the County clubs were again members of, and attended at intervals, the Catholic Association. In the cities, this organization required some slight modification. The Club appointed two committees; one of Inquiry, the other of Management. The Committee of Inquiry made inquiries into all the objects for which these associations were originally instituted, and reported the result of their investigations, at their weekly meetings, to the Committee of Management, who took measures thereon. The Rent collectors were admitted honorary members of the Committee of Inquiry, and were employed most efficiently, from their local knowledge, in procuring all materials which might be necessary for the information and guidance of the Committee of Management. A general meeting of the Club was convened

every month, to receive the joint report of both Committees (which was afterwards transmitted to the Association), and to take such measures, as they might deem most judicious, to carry their suggestions into effect. The plan was sanctioned by the Association, and instantly put into execution. In every County in Munster, and in most counties in Leinster and Connaught, Liberal Clubs were unanimously established. The County Clubs when organised, set about the establishment of their Parish Clubs. There was thus, without representation, a system which more than fully answered all the purposes of representation, rising simultaneously in every part of Ireland. In a few years this system would have been perfected without any extraordinary effort, either on the part of the leaders, or of the people. What every one sees done every day, and on every side, they will find no difficulty in doing at last by themselves. The people had already been so well disciplined by Rent, Provincial, and Simultaneous Meetings, that they scarcely required any farther instruction in order to organise the Liberal Clubs. Wherever they were originated, in a few weeks every member became familiar with the machinery, and qualified to communicate it, and to see it executed, by

others. There was thus one simple, uniform, and permanent system, extending in regular subordination, like the anatomy of the human body, to every extremity of the land, animated and directed by its head, or heart, the Catholic Association of Ireland.*

The influence of these clubs was soon felt. A much more intelligible and graduated union began to exist amongst all classes of Catholics. The Association obtained a more visible supremacy,—a much more manageable description of power. The results to individuals were scarcely less beneficial. The Parish Club opened a safety valve for that gas of political fervour, which had been so long generating at large throughout the body. All private feuds and injurious dissensions were controlled by its order. The mind of the peasant was directed exclusively towards the wrongs of his country. The objects of the Club were generally stated to be, the extension of constitutional knowledge, the propagation of liberal feeling amongst all classes and persuasions, but above all, the suppression of private quarrel, and *the most exact*

* Juvenile Clubs were also instituted in Limerick, Clare, &c., and subsequently imitated in various parts of America. Their influence, had the contest been prolonged, would have been very great.

obedience to the very letter of the law. This was the front and head of every instruction—of every letter—of every speech,—until what had appeared a miracle at the election of Waterford, had now become a habit, and no more a matter of surprise than if it had been an original portion of the peasant's nature. Under the protection of this perfect submission to all just authority, they omitted no occasion of attacking, by every constitutional means, abuse and grievance, wherever it was to be found. All complaints were forwarded to the County Club; if possible, redressed there—if not, forwarded with applications for redress to the Association. Thus was there produced in every county, an active war of constitutional and peaceable resistance, and every antagonist made sensible in his own person of the evils of that monopoly, which he had so long attempted, for personal advantage, to uphold.

It was quite obvious that such a state of things could not last long without producing, in some form or other, a reaction. The anti-Catholics began to be alarmed, or affected to be so, and (as in the instance of the Waterford election) consented to recur to the very tactics of that very body which for the last two years had been the theme of their unceasing sneer

and invective. The organization of the Liberal Clubs is said to have suggested the institution of those counter or anti-Catholic Clubs, which rather infelicitously assumed the name of Brunswick. Their founders should have recollected (the history was recent), that from the house of Brunswick the Catholics had obtained whatever concessions they actually enjoyed, and that it appeared somewhat anomalous to invoke *against* concession, the very name to whose benignant auspices all former concession had been due. The first commencement of the system arose in Dublin. A general meeting was convened of the entire anti-Catholic interest, and after much in-door debating, a series of rules and regulations were at last published, for the future government of the body.* Several names were

* Great division of opinion—natural where the party itself was so divided—was evinced both at the preliminary meeting, and at the meeting for the organization of the club. The Rev. Thomas Magee, son of the Archbishop of Dublin, the Rev. Charles Boyton, fellow of Trinity College, the two Sheehans, editors of the Dublin Mail, wished to pledge the body to an eternal hostility to every species of concession, no matter how ~~modified~~ ^{justified}. Others, less fanatic, or more disinterested, and certainly more judicious, proposed to confine themselves to a declaration that the Brunswick Club had formed solely for purposes of self-defence. There were various shades between these two extremes, according to the

soon added to the list of members—very considerable contributions poured in,—and the old Protestant spirit, at the Derry cry of “No Surrender,” seemed once more to have rallied from its slumber. The meeting in Dublin was at various intervals followed up, by a succession of similar meetings, in every county and city in the country. Parish Clubs, in some instances, were also established in communication with the County Clubs, in the same manner as the County Clubs were put into communication with the general Brunswick Club of Ireland. The ana-

variety of motives—fear, hatred, ignorance, prejudice, &c. which influenced the several speakers. After much altercation, a compromise was effected. A series of comparatively moderate resolutions were acceded to; but the principle of disunion remained behind. The subsequent resolutions of the Branch Clubs, in other parts of Ireland, are strongly contrasted to each other. Some are canting and conciliating; they talk of their affection and solicitude for their Roman Catholic brethren! others full of alarm: the days of 1641 seemed to have returned; others again are furious and frenzied, flaming with menaces of rebellion, carnage, and open civil war. But all this was perfectly well understood, both by friends and foes. It was at first a question of unqualified opposition—it soon became a question of terms and conditions. It was thought the more they blustered, the more would be conceded. But they had to do with uncontrollable circumstances. Terms were no longer within their reach.

logy between the two systems may be traced still farther in the published rules, but the principle and operation of each were extremely different. The Catholic Association grew out of the passions, the wrongs, the wishes, of the vast majority of the people; the Brunswick Club was a new mode of expressing old opinions; the last effort of an oligarchical knot, anxious to retain the hereditary exclusive system of privilege and monopoly, by giving to government and the English nation the false appearance of a determined armed resistance, in case it should presume to interfere with its enjoyment. They were the besieged, and the Catholics the besiegers; they were the minority, the Catholics the majority: both were consequently affected by the advantages and disadvantages of their relative positions. The smaller a party is, the more vigorous its measures, the more close and perfect its combination; but this general rule, in the present instance, suffered many exceptions. The Catholics, by long discipline, had acquired the precision and union of a small party: the largest masses, as in a well-regulated army, were moved with as much facility and certainty as the smallest. They had seen service, and were veterans in these tactics. The Protestants,

on the contrary, were comparatively raw recruits, unused to the habits of the regular soldier.* But the Catholics had many other circumstances, of far higher import, in their favour. They had that untameable spirit of perseverance, which is the child of obstacle and delay,—they had the profound and living conviction that the fortress of the enemy must at last fall: they had, above all, the elevating enthusiasm of men, who fight not with selfish or factious motives, for private or partial ends, but with a really noble spirit, for a really glorious object—the rights of many millions of men, the extension of the blessings of a free constitution to generations yet unborn, the equa-

* One of the greatest disadvantages under which they laboured, arose from the very nature of the elements of which these bodies were formed. Most of the Brunswick Clubs, particularly in the South, were composed of *gentlemen*. They had no co-operators amongst the *people*. This looked “respectable,” but such bodies are without any real use. Gentlemen are not easily induced to ride ten or twenty miles in order to attend committees, the purposes of which are not very obvious, and the attendants on which must of course be very few. Accordingly, scarcely any of these clubs held a third meeting. They would have expired of inanition, like the New Reformation societies, in another year. The Catholics were otherwise situated—they had wrongs and numbers to keep them alive.

lization of society throughout all its branches, and the peace of a nation, and the security of an empire, which had continued for centuries one unbroken scene of discord and of danger. “Nos pro libertate, pro patriâ, pro vitâ, certamus, illis supervacaneum est, pugnare pro potentiâ paucorum.” The power also, which the anti-Catholics possessed, and the power which they hoped to aggregate to their body, by this sudden excitement, was very greatly exaggerated.* They had

* The Protestant census of 1821 exhibits a total population of 6,801,487, of which 4,838,000 were stated to be Catholics, and 1,963,487 Protestants. Mr. Shaw Mason's returns from the clergy in 1814, on which I have already animadverted, allow a still greater proportion in favour of the Protestant interest. Of late years, however, it is well known there has been great diminution by emigration and otherwise, (see statements of Protestants, *Mr. Seymour's speech*, *Mr. Peel's speech on the second reading of the Relief bill*, &c.) and that the Catholics, by purchase of lands, &c. have proportionably augmented. Even in the old corporate towns, and those parts of the North which from their contiguity to Scotland have hitherto been supposed to be exclusively Protestants, the Catholic population has been very rapidly gaining ground upon the Protestant. This has been remarkably the case in Derry, Belfast, &c.; in the South the same causes of course work with a greatly increased activity. Mr. O'Connell, as has been already remarked, from the returns of the Catholic census furnished from the commencement of the New Catholic Association to the 14th

not the millions with them; even the government census, a census taken when the government was

of June 1828 inclusive, calculated even in Ulster two Catholics to one Protestant, and in Munster twenty-one Catholics to one Protestant. But this calculation excluded the great towns, and is confined to one-sixth only of the population, therefore liable to precisely the same objections that have been urged against Mr. Shaw Mason's report. The conclusions drawn from these premises are also extreme. Mr. O'Connell calculates the population of Ireland to amount actually to nearly ten millions. Mr. Malthus's theory would give something approaching to nine millions a conjecture by no means improbable; of these nine millions, eight millions nearly ought to be Catholics. The Catholics of course must increase from physical and moral causes, far more rapidly than the Protestants. A population of eight millions forms a considerable nation, far surpassing most of the kingdoms on the Continent. The kingdom of the Netherlands, comprising Holland, Flanders, &c. has not more than 5,600,000 inhabitants; Austria Proper not more than 5,200,000; Bavaria not more than 3,750,000, &c.; Saxony not more than 1,260,000. There are many indeed who do not admit this augmentation to have been so rapid or considerable, and some recent calculators have attempted to reduce the present Catholic population of Ireland to about 5,500,000, and to raise the Protestant to 1,350,000; but this census is glaringly incorrect, and cannot cohere either with theory, or experience. These errors have arisen, partly from the prejudices of rival sects, and partly from measuring the increase in Ireland by the same scale as that which is applied to most other anciently civilised communities. The only country with which it can be compared, is America; and what Mr.

anti-Catholic, gave a vast preponderance to the Roman Catholic population. There was little hope that by any effort of theirs this preponderance could be lessened : once the balance is swayed from its equilibrium, it descends rapidly. They had then to rely upon the population of another country for support. They knew that

Burke once applied with so much truth, under parallel circumstances, to that country, is at this moment scarcely less applicable to Ireland. He stated, when concession to America was under discussion, that the population of America amounted to two millions and a half. This calculation was thought overrated. He continued : " This, Sir, is, I believe, about the true number. There is no occasion to exaggerate, where plain truth is of so much weight and importance. But whether I put the present numbers too high or too low, is a matter of little moment. Such is the strength with which population shoots in that part of the world, that state the numbers as high as we will, whilst the dispute continues, the exaggeration ends : whilst we are discussing any given magnitude, they are grown to it : whilst we spend our time in deliberating on the mode of governing two millions, we shall find we have more millions to manage."—*Speech, March 22nd, 1775.* The justice of the above conjectures is put, however, beyond a doubt by much surer data, the synoptical tables of the population of Ireland from 1672 to 1821, published frequently. (See *Moreau's Statistical Tables*, p. 4. *Sadler's Ireland, its Evils, and their Remedies*, p. 5, &c. &c.) They give a great increase ; but there is reason to suppose that if the census had been more carefully taken, the result would have been still greater.

population to be honest and equitable ; but they also knew it to be but very partially informed of the state of Ireland, and attached to ancient prejudice with unexampled pertinacity. This ignorance it was easy to deceive, these prejudices it was still more easy to excite. They employed for both purposes the old instruments of reckless misrepresentation, and violent menace and abuse.* They could allow

* The great instrument of Brunswick power was the corrupt press. It was conducted generally by the lowest description of Castle underlings. They were considered identified with the government ; and there were times, in the history of Ireland, when such opinion was just. All the partisans of old monopoly, every person however remotely connected with office, expectants in every form, but above all, and on all occasions, the church, formed the great mass of its subscribers. They thought themselves bound by their allegiance and loyalty, " to aid the hands of government," by giving as much support and circulation to its *real* opinions (as they termed them) as was in their power. The circulation in Ireland was immense ; in England by no means inconsiderable. The funds of the party were expended in forwarding it to every inn of any note, however distant, in the sister kingdom. As regard to accuracy and truth, it may easily be imagined, was not amongst its characteristics. Speeches were made for men who never spoke, small parties were converted into immense meetings, clubs, armies, &c. &c. In the King's County, a small family group, a few brothers and brothers-in-law, assembled. The supple-

themselves a far greater latitude, they imagined, in these arts than the Catholic, for they fought under the protection of far higher powers. Upon this protection they principally relied. They believed the government to be still neutral in the old sense of the word. Mr. Peel had already very amply explained the meaning of such neutrality. The Lord Lieutenant, who did the forms of the office, was allowed to be liberal; but the efficient officers of government had *carte blanche* for the full exercise of all the ancient hostility. The face was for the Catholic; but the intimate feeling, the heart's core, was for his enemy. In this manner, by a faction within a faction, Ireland had long been governed. The petitioner at the Castle did not ask what the Lord Lieutenant thought, but what the Lord Lieutenant's Secretary, or rather what his Secretary's Secretary thought. It was not Lord Wellesley, nor even Mr. Goulburn, but it was Mr. Gregory who held in his hands the destinies of Ireland. The magistrate who was censured by

ment of the next Evening Mail was filled with the important proceedings, and orations of two columns in length given to the eloquent movers and seconders of the resolutions. But a lie that lasts for a single day, will do its work. When the ends were such, it is futile to quarrel about the means. (See *Appendix*.)

the Viceroy had nothing to apprehend, if the censure were not also confirmed by the frown of his servant: there was always a secret appeal from the council chamber of the sovereign to the office desk of the clerk. This machinery in former times had been found omnipotent; there was no reason to think that its power had recently been curtailed. Lord Anglesey, it was true, had already begun to evince a resolution of taking the sword and balance into his own hands, but this had been the usual commencement of every preceding viceroyalty. The determination soon slackened; sooner or later every Lord Lieutenant found himself successively compelled to submit, in his own despite, to the irresistible power of this secret ascendancy. The anti-Catholic party well knew that it borrowed its life from another source, beyond the control of the Roman Catholic. Mr. Peel himself had avowed, that even during the seemingly liberal viceroyalty of Lord Wellesley, he had taken care to neutralise the Catholic principle, by the intermixture of his own anti-Catholic influence.* They doubted not that the Mr.

* The secret working of this machinery is but very partially known. Neither the Marquess of Wellesley nor Mr. Peel is so much to blame as is generally supposed. Neither was fairly dealt with.

Peel of 1828 and 1829 was the Mr. Peel of 1825 and 1826. They looked to the government of England for support. They imagined that the Duke of Wellington waited only such full expression of anti-Catholic feeling, as might give the semblance of Irish Protestant sympathy to the measures of his cabinet; and this once developed, he would then put out that vigorous spirit of coercion, which was so much wanted, and reduce the Irish Catholics again to the same state of servitude which had immediately followed the violent retaliations of 1798. There was some ground, it must be repeated, for these conclusions; they reasoned strictly, after former experience. Such *had been* the mode of misgoverning Ireland for many centuries; nor was there any thing, in the more recent professions or opinions of the cabinet, to prove that it had ceased.*

* "At qui sunt hi," says the historian, of a party not very unlike them at Rome, "at qui sunt hi, qui rempublicam occupavere? Homines sceleratissimi, cruentis manibus, immani avaritiâ, nocentissimi, îdemque superbissimi: quîs fides, decus, pietas, postremo honesta atque inhonesta omnia quæstui sunt. Ita quam quisque pessime fecit, tam maxime tutus est. Metum a scelere suo ad ignaviam vestram transtulere: quos omnis eadem cupere, odisse, eadem metuere in unum coegit; sed hæc inter bonos amicitia est, inter malos factio. Nam fidei quidem, aut concordiæ, quæ spes? Dominari illi

There was another very important superiority which the Catholics enjoyed over their antagonists. Their views were clear and simple; boldly avowed; felt universally; and in the same sense, and at the same time, by the entire body. The Brunswick meetings (as we have had occasion to notice) were close; their projects mitigated, disguised, distorted; shame in some, apprehension in others, lent them the most varied colouring. Their opinions were of all hues; they ran into the most opposite extremes. Some were for blind and reckless extermination,—for the coarse and cruel remedy of blood. These were the licensed and legalised executioners of the vengeance of their party during the last rebellion; they had tasted blood, and the passion had become inveterate. But this was the rankness of a bad nature, and had nothing to do with plan or project. It exhaled itself in delirious invectives and invocations, in appeals to a power which no longer existed, and for objects which could no longer, by any party, be endured. They were few, but prominent; the first at all meet-

volunt, vos liberi esse; facere illi injurias; vos prohibere, postremo sociis vestris veluti hostibus, hostibus pro sociis utuntur. Potestne in tam diversis mentibus *pax*, aut *amicitia* esse?" *Sallustii Jugurtha*, c. 31.

ings, and the last; wherever they were, the loudest,—and whenever loudest, received with most applause. This was the faction which the Catholics considered irreclaimable, and only to be met with the *ultima ratio* of the sword.* A second class, who constituted much the larger portion of the party, were the merely ignorant, and the merely timid. Their timidity arose from their ignorance, and their ignorance from their distance and separation from the Catholics. They were afraid of the ghost, which a moral illusion, as deceptive as a physical one, had

* “ 9th Resolution. That this club, being founded on defensive principles, disclaims the application of party, and proposes no *personal* hostility to any class of his Majesty’s subjects,” &c.—*Resolutions of Edenduffearick Constitutional Club*. “ That while we are determined to uphold the principles of the present constitution, we disclaim all intention of hostility towards our Roman Catholic countrymen,” &c.—*Resolutions of Coote Hill Constitutional Brunswick Club*. “ That in establishing this club we are not actuated by a feeling of hostility, but of cordial good-will towards our Roman Catholic neighbours and fellow-subjects, whose real interests, no less than our own, will be best secured by the continuance of the existing constitution.”—*Resolutions of Killyman Constitutional Brunswick Club*. There are innumerable other instances of this wretched cant; see *Appendix*. It was with some such formula that the Spaniards put their Jews and Indians to death; all “ for their real interests.”

conjured up. They talked of standing on their defence; of granting the Catholic every thing, but what they could not grant consistently with their own security; and of loving him as a man and hating him as a citizen; with numerous other incoherencies, proofs still stronger than the preceding of the pernicious lunacy which then infected so large a portion of the public mind.* A third party was better informed, and somewhat more rational; they used both—the ignorance of one party, and the ferocity of the other—for their own private ends. They had too just an estimate of the progress of moral and political revolutions, not to know that it was not in the power of any man, or any body of men, to pre-

* “ John Basilowitz was learned for the time he lived in, and particularly in matters of religion, for which reason he would never suffer any to be persecuted for their belief, knowing that conviction must come from reason and conscience, and not from violence and torture, which may make men hypocrites, but cannot make them good Christians.

“ The Jews, however, he could not endure; he thought that those who had betrayed and killed the Redeemer of the world ought not to be trusted, or even tolerated by any prince who professed himself a Christian; and in consequence of this opinion, he obliged them either to be baptised or to quit his dominions. But he ought to have considered that the Jews of his time were not accessory to the crime of their ancestors.”—*Universal History*.

vent, though by a great deal of ingenuity they might delay, the claims or wishes of so large a portion of any civilised community. They looked not to a victory (now impossible), but to *better terms*. The question had at last become one of mere capitulation. They thought that by taking the opposite extreme, the government, when compelled to an adjustment, as they admitted must sooner or later be the case, would adopt a middle term between Protestant apprehensions on the one hand, and Catholic encroachment on the other.* In this they reasoned after the

* Any gentleman who has had the opportunity of mixing much with both parties, must of course have observed that there was a public tone and a private tone of thinking and speaking, and that the latter, for the most part, was very considerably, in force and energy, below the former. The most violent demagogues of the Association, when closely examined, were found to be not altogether the untameable hyenas they were usually represented. Many have left their company declaring with amazement, that their claws were not longer nor their teeth sharper than those of other people. So it was with many of the most angry of their opponents. Men coming from North, and South-East, and West, at last agreed in the same point. They generally commenced with the most outrageous invectives, and as generally concluded with the peace-maker "If"—"If the Catholics would only give up the forty-shilling franchise, &c. &c.—why then"—When the question came to that, it was already conceded. All farther discussion was mere

usual practice of human nature, and it is not quite certain whether such reasonings have not in some degree been justified by the result. A fourth party, mingling amongst all, belonging to none, but successively confounded with each, were those who, having been accustomed from an early period to act in parties, could not well detach themselves, in the present instance, from their old habits, or companions. It was not an affair of prejudice, or of thought. It was a matter of relationship—of acquaintanceship—of mere indolence—of want of thought. A few violent leaders started up, cheered—commanded—denounced. The liberal Protestant party were not yet in the field. The neutrals having no neutral camp to fall back upon, and none but the Association and the Brunswick Club to choose between, allowed themselves to be frightened or seduced, or sometimes dropped quietly away, without almost knowing it, into the ranks of the anti-Catholics. Many of these were very excellent men; in private life, ornaments to their rank and station; in public, good citizens, as far as the laws would permit them; and sincerely desirous from their general habits for the pacification and happiness of all parties, though squabbling about the more or less of an unavoidable bargain.

comparatively unacquainted with the means by which such objects might best be effected. In this new society they often felt themselves as much strangers probably as they would have done in the Catholic Association. All these heterogeneous materials were however hurried together by the suddenness and violence of the impulse; and though they presented at first a face of compact and massive strength, the close observer might easily have detected the repulsion and the incoherence which lurked and fermented below.

It was quite clear that the moment the external compressing power was removed, or the false support on which they leant in the government had begun to be withdrawn, that all this organization would necessarily crumble before such numerous internal repellents, and resolve itself rapidly into those more congenial elements from which it had originally been forced. But the Protestant population, either in England or in Ireland, did not regard it in this light, and it was upon this delusion only that the momentary power of the Brunswickers was suddenly constructed. But such delusions cannot and ought not to last; the mist of the morning disappears before noon. Truth, in a writing and reading nation, will sooner or later struggle through every

misrepresentation. The cause of the Catholic had worked itself through far greater obstacles. It is on its first entry, and not in its progress, that you can stop the wedge.

The Catholics themselves were first indignant, then alarmed, then gradually satisfied, and at last gratified at the array which was brought against them. They saw in it another travesty of the old faction. Orangeism had been branded even by the laws, and required a new disguise to give it currency. The old hatred and abhorrence, they knew, still existed. They felt, in the burning of their chapels, in the licensed midnight murders, in the authorised stands of arms which were retained in their villages, and the sort of irregular martial law which was exercised by the Protestant yeomanry, in the most populous districts in Ulster, that there still existed an unavowed political confederacy secretly banded against them, from whose grasp, neither personal resistance, nor the feeble and partial efforts of the law, could effectually accomplish their rescue. They considered it a benefit, this change from the secret ambush to the open field. Their enemies did for them, what they had often attempted of themselves to do in vain—voluntarily throw off the mask, and marked themselves down incontestably for un-

disguised foes. As to their violence, there were few amongst the Catholics who had very legitimate reasons to complain of the mode in which they expressed it. Bubbles there will be in fermenting waters, and it is out of the nature of things, that wherever passion or turbulence are, they should not soon find a thousand tongues to give them vent and name. But they complained, and justly complained, of the causes which produced this violence. A suffering man has some apology in the common feelings of human nature for his exclamations,—not so the man who inflicts the suffering. It is but a poor motive to cry out, because he is not permitted to inflict more. But there was a paramount advantage in all this, which compensated for every evil, and soon began to impress itself upon every dispassionate observer. The organization, now in progress, must either very rapidly subside, or else become so general, as to divide the nation into two distinct armies, preserving indeed the tranquillity and order of a well-disciplined population, but at any time ready to rush into immediate collision, whenever a favourable opportunity should present itself. The neutrals were diminishing and withdrawing day after day from the dangerous ground, and the country was thus surrendered up to either host. The government, which

from indolence or fear had staved off as long as they could, the hour of decision, would (it was quite clear) in their own despite, be compelled to decide for either party. This crisis must sooner or later arrive; the sooner, the greater chance of pressing through it with favourable symptoms. Every hour parties were acquiring habits more difficult to be thrown off; the country was more and more taught to look for alliances elsewhere. If the Brunswicker turned to England, the Catholic turned to America. The question became complicated with new demands, or new securities, after every battle which was lost or won, and the government incurred a more difficult task, and a heavier responsibility, at every step. These were things which struck every man who for a moment could place himself sufficiently high above either party as to be enabled to embrace both.* A judicious politician could not regret the

* Lord Chief Justice Hale, in his life of Atticus, has conjecturally described almost every feature of this alarming position. The reader might fancy he was speaking of Ireland. "When two or more great parties in a state engage one against another, *accusing publicly each other, each soliciting others to be of their party, at length using discriminations or habits or signs*, and possibly in a little time *public affronts and rencounters*, and at last it may be *open hostility*, and all this while the true real governors of that state,

hurrying on to this inevitable conclusion. The Brunswick Clubs effectually did this, and they did much more, they made it felt in the sorest and most intimate manner to the very government. They heard every hour from both parties, "that concession or coercion was now unavoidable." They at last returned the same answer to the country. The alternative still depended upon themselves; in another year the selection

whether monarch or senate, sit still and look on, it may be out of respect to some of the heads of either party, it may be out of policy to suffer either party to worry and weaken and ruin one another, hoping thereby to preserve the government, or it may be out of a weak and tame and inconsiderate opinion, contenting themselves with the name or external face, title and ensigns of government, and the professed respects of either party, but not daring to interpose any acts of real authority to suppress or remedy those growing mischiefs, fearing they should not be able to carry it through in respect of the potency of parties; and so the governors stand and look on, contenting themselves with the compliments and professions of subjection by both parties, till at last one party getting the better of the other, lays by the disguise of pretended subjection, and gives the law to his awful governors, and makes him do what he pleases or suffer what he inflicts. And this commonly is the mischief that attends a government, that suffers faction to grow so great, that at last they become masterless, and either by conjunction of both parties, or prevalence of one, give the law to their lawful governors."

would have been beyond their power. The two armies would have soon cut short all delay; the entire nation would have plunged forward, blind, and headlong into open combat.

The anti-Catholics were on the defence—the Catholics on the attack—they had the choice of measures, an enormous advantage. Their organization was now complete. They waited only for an opportunity to apply it. They were not long condemned to suspense. A great occasion, from a quarter least expected, an occasion which generated a series of proceedings, the proximate causes of the recent great measure, sprung out of the existing state of the country. It was a new event in the history of the constitution—it was new in the history of Ireland. It was not the result of project, or preparation. Like the Waterford election, it was matter of hazard that it was ever thought of; but, like the Waterford election, the manner in which that thought was seized and acted on, has gone far to decide the future destinies of Ireland.

One of the first measures which the Catholics adopted, on the accession of Lord Wellington to the Premiership, was a series of resolutions, under the name of Pledges, directed not so much against the Premier specifically, as against his

administration. The Duke was then believed (and there was nothing in his parliamentary declarations which controverted the belief) to be still hostile to the cause of Emancipation. That the Catholics, on such impressions, were justified in withdrawing from him all confidence, appears unquestionable. It was on a similar principle that the late elections had been contested ; it is on a similar principle that all parties are usually formed, in either House of parliament. No one, of course, ever contemplated the continuance of such distrust, beyond the existence of the hostility which had created it. It was directed, not against the Duke of Wellington, but against a presumed enemy. The Catholics, acting on their own frequent professions, had petitioned for the Dissenters. The Duke had given the Dissenters his support : this, to an experienced observer, no doubt indicated a predisposition in favour of the Catholics, and seemed to justify some relaxation from the rigour of the pledge. But in despite of Mr. O'Connell's earnest advocacy, and the impressive letter of the very influential originator of that beneficent law, Lord John Russell, the Association continued inexorable. After a very violent debate, the motion for the rescinding of the resolution was rejected ; and it was determined to act upon the de-

claration on the very first occasion which fortune might present. This occasion was not long deferred : Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald a short time after accepted a place in the cabinet, and vacated his seat for the county of Clare.

It is very possible, that on the original passing of this resolution, the Catholic Association did not expect to be called upon to act upon it, until the next general dissolution of parliament, when the entire enthusiasm and vigour of the body being brought into action, little difficulty would exist in giving it its full effect. But the case immediately before them was isolated, and affected by very peculiar difficulties. Mr. V. Fitzgerald was not an ordinary candidate. In some particulars, he had very great advantages over the Beresfords, and Fosters, and Jocelyns. There was no spirit of settled hatred in the people against the individual, or against his family : he had in the aristocracy and gentry, each of whom could count some instance of his friendship in their own persons, devoted and well-merited adherents. In the county at large, there was rather a feeling of gratitude, than otherwise, towards Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald. His father, Prime Sergeant Fitzgerald, had just claims to their affections. An officer of government, he had voted against the Union, at a period

when venality was considered as little less than virtue. Mr. V. Fitzgerald himself had placed the Catholics under very considerable obligations. He had constantly voted for their question, and was known to be a devoted advocate of the measure. In personal qualifications, too, no man more truly possessed all those gifts, by which a candidate is likely to assure to himself the largest share of popular favour. He was a gentleman of the most conciliating manners, and an orator of no common eloquence. But Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald came strictly under the ban of the late resolution. He was a Minister, and a member of the obnoxious administration. To this ground of opposition was also superadded another, of scarcely less importance in the minds of the Catholics. Mr. Fitzgerald had lately voted against the Dissenters, and in some degree neutralised by this act his ardent professions in favour of civil and religious freedom. The case was clear : the only question now was, whether the Catholic Association would act upon it immediately. The matter was decided in a few days: indeed, little doubt ought to have existed for a moment, in the mind of any rational or honourable man, what course ought to have been adopted. The Association had been more than once taunted with their *paper resolutions*. They

had pledged themselves, in the face of the country. They were strictly bound to adhere to this pledge. It was not less true policy. The life by which such bodies live, is public opinion. Whatever was the risk, the experiment was necessary ; the prize was worth the venture : if successful, there was a certainty that the same principle would spread with tenfold energy through every part of Ireland, and with a success which no Minister could contemplate without dismay. The contest was not an ordinary contest. It involved in its issue the far mightier battle of emancipation. The hour of the final engagement had at last come : the field where it was to be decided was the county of Clare. The Association looked round, and for some time hesitated—success seemed more than doubtful.*

* The evidence of a witness, and a very important co-operator in this momentous struggle, Mr. Steele, gives ample proof of this assertion. I quote his own words—"It is a fact," says he, "perfectly well known, that my friend O'Gorman Mahon and myself were the only persons in the Association who said the work could be done ; and for saying so we were treated as visionaries (the same thing occurred in Waterford) by many of the most experienced members of the Catholic body.

"We left Dublin together to commence it, notwithstanding that we anticipated, with a confidence almost amounting to certainty, that on our arrival in Clare we should be com-

No candidate could be induced to come forward against Mr. Fitzgerald. Major M'Namara, who

pelled to agitate for the principle alone, without having for a while any particular candidate, as we had good reason to believe that Major M'Namara would not come to the poll.

“ We left the Catholic Association rooms in the afternoon of Saturday, and on Sunday morning, after travelling all night, arrived in Limerick, and were informed that our anticipations were well founded, as the Major had withdrawn, and declared his intention not to oppose Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald.

“ Upon receiving this intelligence, my friend urged me again to accept the offer which had been pressed upon me in Dublin, namely, that I should declare myself the candidate to oppose Mr. Fitzgerald, as my return would be quite certain, supported by the whole influence of the Catholic Association, superadded to whatever hold I might have had upon the attachment of the Catholic population, by reason of the industry and zeal with which I endeavoured to promote the cause of the liberty of Ireland.

“ I refused it decisively, assigning the same reason, namely, that it would be suicide of my own character, as it would afford my political and personal enemies an opportunity of insinuating, that I had been writing and speaking with great fervour, not for the purpose which I averred, namely, the good of the cause, but for an ulterior personal advantage to myself. I told him, at the same time, that I would co-operate with him to the last extremity; and that the very fact of my refusal of the representation myself, would quadruple my influence in exciting the popular feeling.

“ I then mentioned Mr. William O'Brien, the present

united in himself all the necessary recommendations, "a Protestant in religion, a Catholic in

member for Ennis, as in every way qualified to be the second representative; but I doubted whether the engagements of the family with Mr. Fitzgerald might not be a bar to his coming forward to oppose him at the hustings.

"We left Limerick, crossed the Shannon at Thomond Bridge, and found ourselves in Clare; and immediately commenced agitation, by the distribution of addresses of the Association, Dr. Doyle's letter to Mr. O'Connell, and other papers.

"We passed through Cratloe Wood, and went to the chapel, where the people were assembling to hear mass: service had not commenced, and we harangued them from the altar for a few moments, got their promise of support, left them a number of the printed addresses for distribution, and proceeded rapidly to Six-mile Bridge, where the first mass had just terminated. Six-mile Bridge is a beautiful village on the river Ougarnee, at the foot of what were formerly the Clare, but are now the O'Connell mountains. We entered the chapel, had a few moments' conversation with Dr. Cloine, the parish priest, in the sacristy—wrote a resolution in the strongest form, that Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald should be opposed—moved the priest to the chair—spoke with great vehemence, to show the people we were thoroughly in earnest—got the resolution carried with acclamation—dispersed a number of the people with the printed addresses, and were setting off in red-hot haste for Newmarket on Fergus, when the horses were taken from the carriage, and we were drawn rapidly for a mile out of the village with enthusiastic shoutings.

"The same agitational tactics were put in operation in the

politics, a Milesian in descent," peremptorily refused. There was no other gentleman in the

chapel of Newmarket—service had been over, but the bell was rung again; and Sir Edward O'Brien's and Sir Augustine Fitzgerald's tenants promised, with huzzaing and shouting, to oppose Mr. Fitzgerald, and support whatever candidate we might propose.

"We were drawn in triumph out of Newmarket on Fergus by the people, and proceeded with the utmost rapidity to Ennis, where the Catholic gentry and an immense concourse of the people had been for some hours in the chapel awaiting our arrival.

"Mr. Lawless, 'Honest Jack Lawless,' had reached Ennis early that morning, that he might co-operate in the good work of agitation. The Rev. Mr. Lynch, and the Rev. Mr. O'Gorman, the Catholic curates of Ennis, Father John Murphy of Corrofin, and a number of the other Catholic clergy, were collected in the chapel.

"The enthusiasm with which the resolutions proposed in Ennis were carried upon this occasion is not to be described; neither would it be very easy to do justice by any description to the dismay of the Protestant gentry, when they heard of the manner in which we had passed our Sunday morning.

"It is manifest that the enthusiasm which was displayed in Clare must have been enthusiasm for the principle alone, as we were only agitating, for some abstract entity, who was to be the instrument of putting out the British cabinet minister. O'Gorman Mahon, although half dead with exhaustion, without taking any repose, set out that very evening for Dublin again, where he offered the representation to Lord William Paget, which however his Lordship declined,

county sufficiently liberal, or influential, or willing, to take his place. The cause seemed

by reason of the situation which was then held by his illustrious father.

“ The public spirit and private character of Mr. William O’Brien were so highly appreciated, that I was authorised to write him a letter to London, suited to the exigency of the time.

“ I stated, at the commencement of these observations, that I should mention an incident, which I conceive to be of peculiar interest, and its interest arose from this—that it evinced the ardour of the people, and at the same time their steadiness and stern composure—qualities of such novel generation in the peasantry of Ireland.

“ The cattle fair of Spansel Hill near Ennis, one of the principal fairs of Clare, was to take place on the Wednesday following the Sunday I have described ; and there, as a matter of course, would be congregated at this time an immense multitude of the people, and also a great portion of the gentry of the county, the more especially as Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald himself was expected to be there to canvass.

“ Mr. Lawless, as a lay agitator, ‘ Father Tom M’Eerny ’ of Feacle, as one of the Popish priesthood, and I, as a heretic agitator of the Catholic Association, came to a resolution to go together to this fair, that we might sound the feelings of the people, under the suspense which had been created by their not knowing who was to be their second candidate.

“ On our arrival we quitted our carriage, which had been ornamented with a profusion of green boughs, and walked quietly among the people, abstaining altogether from any kind of harangue. The green boughs on the carriage, and

lost, when the circumstances which appeared most fatal to its success, were the very cir-

the appearance of such a triumvirate, whilst Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald himself was at the fair, were sufficiently impressive indications of the object of our visit.

“ No crowds collected around us—there was no shouting or huzzaing — there were not ‘ curses,’ — but blessings, ‘ not loud but deep,’ upon us as we moved, but no open demonstrations of any kind of interest; and when we walked to the outskirts of the fair, we were scarcely followed by a single individual.

“ We could observe the Protestant gentry, who were collected together on horseback in a very numerous body on the side of a hill, at a little distance from the tents, glancing at each other with smiles of derision at the two agitators from Dublin, who appeared to them to be quite deserted and unthought of by the people, notwithstanding all the enthusiastic manifestation of their spirit on the Sunday preceding.

“ While they supposed they had to laugh at us, we were in reality smiling at them; for I knew beforehand, and explained to my friend Mr. Lawless, that they had no more perception of the political state of their country, than of the currents and under-currents of a sea which they had never seen.

“ I introduced him, however, to several of our political opponents, who acted upon the occasion in such a manner as to evince, very unequivocally, that they much better understood the principles and practice of gentlemanly courtesy, than those great principles of human nature, which generate, in their occult working, great moral revolutions.

“ Mr. O’Callaghan of Ballinahinch endeavoured to lure

cumstances which really constituted the glory and value of the struggle. The agitation had

me into a public disputation ; but as we were surrounded by Protestant aristocratical auditory, predisposed (predetermined I should say) to award to him the laurel crown of victory in the argument, I laughingly declined submitting the cause to their adjudication, and made a retreat from the hill, and Mr. O'Callaghan's political dialectics. We then retired to a tent, with the celebrated Father John Murphy of Corrofin, and other gentlemen, that we might have private conversation with the persons whom we wished to speak with, and that we might at the same time send out our instructions.

“ We then received renewed assurances that the people were staunch to a man ; but at the same time, that although their resolution was taken decisively, and their spirit burning to have an opportunity of voting at the hustings, they refrained from any display of their feelings, and kept aloof from us in the fair, as they were under the eye of their landlords ; and if there should be no contest, they dreaded their vengeance, if they should have been seen to make any demonstrations of favour to the opponents of ‘ Vesey.’

“ If they were certain of a contest, they were, they said, utterly regardless of their landlords, and ‘ would vote with the Association as sure as God was in heaven. He (a landlord) may take my pig, and my cow, and my body,’ said a peasant of Clare, ‘ but, thank God, he cannot take my soul.’

“ This calmness and steadiness, of a people so much in general under the sway of impulse, was an overwhelming proof of the event of the election.

“ We left the fair ; and just before we drove away, Mr. Lawless, from the front of the carriage, made a short but

gone on, the county was roused. Urged by the arguments of his friends and of the Association, Mr. O'Connell declared himself the new candidate, for the representation of the county of Clare, in an energetic address from Dublin.

heart-stirring speech, giving the people assurance that they should have a candidate, and at the same time assuring them that there was nothing doubtful in the contest, for our victory was certain.

“ The long-repressed feeling of the people then burst forth into enthusiastic shouting, and we drove away at full speed on our return to Ennis.

“ After this I strongly recommended that, in case we could not get a Protestant gentleman of high character to oppose Mr. Fitzgerald, instead of getting a common-place person, we should get a parish-clerk or grave-digger, give him a qualification out of the Catholic rent, and return him to parliament in derision of the influence of the Wellington administration. In two days after, an end was put to all suspense upon this subject, by receiving from Dublin the address of the great agitator to the people of Clare, announcing a candidate, in opposition to the British cabinet minister, sustained by the Protestant aristocracy of the county, and that candidate was no other than the Catholic Daniel O'Connell !!!

“ In two or three days after, Mr. Sheil brought the splendour of his talents and his name to the good work in Clare, the Rev. Mr. Maguire, Mr. Maurice O'Connell, &c. &c.; and, finally, came the great agitator himself, accompanied by his counsel Mr. Bennett, and Nicholas Purcell O'Gorman, the secretary to the Catholics of Ireland, and a numerous body of other gentlemen.”

The contest now took another character. Had Major M'Namara stood, large deductions, in case of success, would necessarily have been made, from the absolutely popular, or rather Catholic nature, of the victory. Much would have been set down, and not unreasonably, to the connexions, to the religion, to the character, of the man himself. But in the struggle which ensued, the pretensions of the contending parties, by which the empire was divided, were brought forward, in their most naked and unaided shape. It was a wager of battle between the Catholics and the Minister—between the people and the aristocracy—between the Association and the Brunswick Club. Emancipation or continued exclusion was to be the result of the struggle. No Minister could stand against a succession of elections like that of Clare. In this particular, it was of far higher importance than the election of Waterford. But the people had advanced, and bolder measures had been rendered necessary by their advancement. The one had begun—the other was destined to close the contest.

The moment Mr. O'Connell appeared in Ennis, the battle seemed already gained. He was received with all those demonstrations of attachment, to which a life spent in

the cause had justly entitled him. Through a dense crowd of enthusiastic peasants, who had rushed in from all parts of the country, with their wives and children around them, the new candidate proceeded, in a sort of public triumph, to the hustings. It was a scene remarkable, even in this country of political anomalies. On one side stood the whole array of ministerial and aristocratic power, all that political and personal influence could collect ;—on the other stood the people, and the candidate of the people, supported by the strength of his own popularity, but chiefly by the conviction that he was the champion of a cause, in which there was not a Catholic before him who was not as deeply interested as himself. Around him were the gentlemen who usually took part in Catholic proceedings, each marked by some of those peculiarities, which are brought out into such high relief by the stir and excitation of public life, and bearing a very remarkable contrast to the sombre equality and affected calmness of the opposite party. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald was proposed in the usual form by Sir Edward O'Brien, a former antagonist of the candidate, but who on this occasion seems to have sunk, in the common anxiety for the interests of his caste, all personal recollections of ancient feud and animosity.

He was seconded by Sir Augustine Fitzgerald. Mr. O'Connell was then proposed by Mr. O'Gorman Mahon, a Catholic, and seconded by Mr. Steele, a Protestant gentleman, both energetic members of the Association, and well known for the spirit and intrepidity with which they had supported and extended its principles and measures throughout that portion of Ireland. The candidates then addressed the assembled multitudes, but with far different effect. This was not a time when the nicely-balanced sentences of parliamentary warfare, or even the deprecating eloquence of a lukewarm friend, could avail much against the fierce and impassioned invective, the stern and avenging defiance, of such a man as Mr. O'Connell. Yet Mr. Fitzgerald stood in a position most likely to affect an Irish audience, however uncultivated. His father had been long endeared to them by his public and private virtues, and he lay at that moment on a bed of sickness. The mention of all this touched them; but pathos is very akin to ridicule, and the Irish laugh with still greater facility than they weep. Mr. O'Connell profited by his knowledge of this characteristic. Public life begets no very great nicety of feeling, and Mr. O'Connell on this occasion

did not prove himself an exception. The result however of that address far exceeded the calculations of his enemies;—it quite equalled the sanguine hopes of his friends. The people were swept away by their own enthusiasm; Mr. O'Connell had merely given language to their feelings;—the spirit had seized them, and its name was legion. To a man they demanded with impatience to be led to the poll.

The first day's proceedings decided the election, — not indeed by the absolute majority which it produced, but by the unequivocal evidence it gave of the fixed determination of the people. The only matter of consideration during the remainder of the election was, how most they should enhance victory, by keeping the immense population in better order, and arranging for future impression every circumstance connected with the contest. The popular party, if very ardent, was not the less judicious; they carried into this more active species of warfare, a perfect knowledge of the tactics of popular movements, and a practised facility in varying them, according as the person or the occasion required. The same species of election campaigning (if so it may be termed) which had been attended with such signal success

in Waterford, was now adopted. Mr. Sheil, Mr. Lawless, Mr. Steele, &c. &c. in company at times with the Catholic priests, made a tour of the several chapels, and roused the people from one end of Clare to the other. Every where they were heard, with the most unbounded enthusiasm. The close logic, the easy humour of the celebrated Father Maguire,—celebrated by his chivalrous acceptance of the challenge of Mr. Pope, and by the no less disgraceful conspiracy of his opponents,—was scarcely less overpowering than the indefatigable patriotism, and fervent eloquence of Father Murphy of Corrofin. The difficulty did not consist in kindling; but in managing the flame, when it was once aroused. But in this they had an auxiliary, upon which they had every good reason to count. The lessons of the Association had produced their result: the leaders now met the full reward of their previous exertions. The waving of a hand, the glance of an eye, was enough to calm or to lead the most turbulent. Wherever the agitators passed, peace and order followed in their train. Near thirty thousand people bivouacked every night in the streets of Ennis—men and women of all ages, of all tempers.* They met together at

* Mr. Steele gives a strong but just description of some of these meetings: "And when he aroused them at mid-

stated hours in appointed houses for their meals, with their wives and children, and received, in the most perfect order, from large caldrons of bread and milk, their daily pittance, as long as their services were required at the election. During all this time they abstained, with the most perfect self-denial, and a cheerfulness the admiration of all around them, from every species of intoxicating drink. "Their whiskey," as they said, "was water." The disastrous results which usually arose at fairs, &c. from such indulgences, were placed before them; their leaders and their clergy were indefatigable in impressing, by every motive most likely to flatter their pride and their prejudices, the imperative necessity of an exact compliance with this duty. They obeyed them with a precision, a perseverance, a devotion, which even in a less noble cause would have been really admirable.

night," speaking of O'Gorman Mahon, "resigning the certainty of his own return, if he had been the candidate, and called them to their illuminated altars, and stood with their priests, and told them he summoned them to vote for O'Connell, for their religion, and their country, it is not within the power of language to convey any conception of the scene." See also the very graphic and animated account of the same scenes in the *N. Monthly Magazine for October and November, 1828.*

Not a single instance of intoxication occurred during the election; scarcely a single quarrel.* They threw themselves, with an abandonment of all their ordinary feelings, totally and unreservedly upon their leaders. It was not the mere enthusiasm of the followers of a popular chief, or the discipline of a veteran army, but it had something of the attachment of children to parents, an affection mingled with resolution which nothing could distract. The troops which had been assembled round the town, to the number of several thousands, with four pieces of artillery, looked with utter astonishment on this peaceable resistance. It was an organization which, as it never violated the law, the law could not act upon, without violating the right of the subject. Every person knew this perfectly: it was not a blind or passive obedience,

* An anecdote has been related which places this in a strong light. A stout-built peasant came up to Mr. O'Gorman Mahon, and complained that he had been struck by one of the opposite party, "a diminutive little cratur not higher than his knee." "Why didn't you knock him down?" said O'Gorman Mahon. "Oh! then, your honour, I thought you and the Association had forbidden us. Else—," said he,—and immediately stretched his brawny arm to its full. The spirit of this man was the spirit of every Catholic in the county.

but a rational sense of the utility of the conduct which their leaders had traced out to them, and the perfect conviction that no other means existed by which their end could be so certainly achieved. Before the election was over, the very military who were sent to keep good order at Ennis, were converted, by the good humour and good conduct of the peasantry, into enthusiastic friends. They frequently cheered each other as they passed along. The peasants, as at Waterford, regarded them not in the light of jailers, sent there to check the expression of their honest feelings, but as protectors, commissioned to see fair play on both sides, and to give every man an opportunity of expressing his opinion as he might judge most fit.* The termi-

* This was the feeling throughout the whole of the contest, and inculcated studiously, both in word and deed, by the agitators. When Mr. O'Connell, during his chairing, passed by the Infirmary Barracks at Ennis, he called upon his supporters to salute the officers: "Take off your hats, my friends," said he, "and salute the officers of the bravest army in the world." On passing before Sir Charles Doyle, who in compliance with the representations of Mr. O'Gorman Mahon had withdrawn the troops, Mr. O'Connell thanked him in the most complimentary manner, on the very excellent dispositions he had made for the preservation of the peace; and added, "that the bravest men were always the most strenuous supporters of constitutional rights." The

nation of such a struggle, after the first day of polling, was no longer a matter of doubt. The landlords who brought in their tenants, in the fond persuasion that they would not desert them in an emergency which most required their assistance, were suddenly deprived of their votes, at the very moment they were on the point of bringing them to the poll. The same open canvass of every freeholder, no matter who might be his landlord, practised for the first time with such effect at Waterford, was more boldly avowed, and acted on, with still greater energy, during the Clare election. Mr. O'Gorman Mahon, at the very outset of the contest, had stated candidly, to all whom it might concern, his readiness to meet any gentleman who on that score might think himself aggrieved, and proceeded immediately to canvass the freeholders of those very landlords amongst his opponents whom he knew to be most punctilious upon such subjects. This gave a decided tone to the entire election. The priests and the agitators were accused of lying in wait in the vicinity of the hustings for the tender consciences of the electors. Whenever a "batch" of freeholders same spirit, of course, animated every class of the people. Not a single insult was offered to the soldiery from the commencement to the end of the election.

appeared, a glance of the priest's eye (they were often accused of "looking in a particular way" at their parishioners), or a few bold phrases sent forth vehemently from the top of a coach or a cart, by the agitators, carried off hundreds at a time to the side of the popular candidate. Against such magic and such magicians, it was idle to contend. After a contest of six days—the events of every day more and more augmenting the popular confidence—Mr. Fitzgerald declined continuing any longer the needless struggle, and Mr. O'Connell was announced, after a little reluctance on the part of the High Sheriff, to be the duly elected representative to serve in parliament for the county of Clare.

This most remarkable event produced an extraordinary sensation, not merely in the county of Clare, but throughout all Ireland. Some vented their fruitless indignation at the foul profanation: a Papist had entered the sanctuary of their monopoly, and taken possession of their most important right by force. Others consoled themselves with the reflection, that the triumph would not be of very long duration: it might be true (they observed), that he had been returned by a priestridden multitude for an Irish county; but the contest would be of a very different description when he should have to plead before

the people of England his right to take his seat in the imperial parliament. This, however, was but a limited view of its consequences. It was very immaterial, as to the great question, whether or not Mr. O'Connell should immediately succeed. A far more mighty blow had been struck, than giving an individual a seat in the British senate. Incontestible proof had been put forward that a new order of things had *really* arisen in Ireland. The menaces and denunciations of the Association orators had been long treated by Ministers as insolent, but idle declamations. But here was the thing itself, so palpably, so sternly expressed, that it was quite impossible, even for the most deluded or prejudiced opponent of the Catholics, to shut his eyes to its existence or results. A Cabinet Minister—a warm friend to the Catholics—a gentleman, wielding the most extensive government patronage, and adding new influence of a still more comprehensive and binding nature to its distribution, by the personal grace and kindness which accompanied it—expelled contumeliously from a seat, which he had long held with distinguished credit to himself and his constituents, was no doubt a very striking and alarming political phenomenon. But such things had happened in many former elections;

nor was it so unnatural an exercise of a right so strictly popular, and influenced by popular changes, as the right of the elective franchise. Yet with all these abatements, a very material distinction was still to be made between this contest and all others which had preceded it. The principle here illustrated had never before been tried in Ireland. Generally speaking, neither the opposing candidate, nor any of his constituents, neither Mr. O'Connell, nor the priests, nor the agitators, nor the freeholders, had any political, certainly no personal bias, against Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald. The man was nothing in the case—but the measure was every thing. It was *designed to tell Ministers, in a language which should no longer be misunderstood—that wherever the Association chose to call, that there were the people ready to follow;—that obedience to the Association was the paramount principle in the heart of every peasant in the country;—that the power of the Association was therefore absolute and universal;—that it could not be got rid of by the law, for it never infringed the law;—that it could not be got rid of by brute force, for it never rendered brute force necessary;—that it was therefore unattackable and enduring;—that unattackable itself, it could attack others;—that without injuring established institutions, it might make use of these very institutions for every purpose of injury;*

—that it could wield the constitution against the constitution;—introduce a sullen perpetual war into the bosom of peace;—disturb every relation of society, without violating a single enactment on which such relations repose;—and, finally, produce such an order of things as to COMPEL the Minister to choose between coercion or conciliation—between justice or tyranny—between war or peace—between equalization or revolution.—It was intended to tell him, that the CRISIS HAD COME, and there was no longer any time left him for pause or deliberation. This was the moral of the piece,—and it was proclaimed in a manner which shook the most apathetic from their stupor. The entire nation was awakened — Protestant and Catholic became equally interested. In the most remote parts of England nothing but Clare was spoken of: it was the first time that Ireland had truly penetrated to the mind of England since the period of her disastrous rebellion. The defeated candidate hastened over, and had himself an immediate conference with the Premier. The battle had been fought and lost. The election of Clare had decided the question. The vivid description of an eye-witness, and of such an eye-witness; of a Cabinet Minister—of a man deeply versed in the affairs of Ireland, anxious about her destinies,—trembling lest whilst he was speak-

ing the Rubicon might already have been passed, made, or ought to have made, an impression on a mind less familiarised with human nature, or less unbiassed by local prejudices, than the Duke of Wellington's. This great event may not have cast the first seeds of the approaching measure in his mind, but it unquestionably contributed much to bring them to their destined maturity. A series of such elections would amount in fact to a revolution. Even in the presumption that Mr. O'Connell should not be permitted to take his seat—a result upon which the Catholics calculated—the contest was far from being decided in favour of the government. There was nothing in such a decision which could preclude Mr. O'Connell from standing again, and being again returned for the same county—nothing which could preclude every county in which the Catholic interest predominated, that is, with but three exceptions, every county in Ireland, from returning in a similar manner Catholic members:—nothing, in fine, which could preclude such members from being returned election after election, and thus disturbing to its very foundations the entire representation of the country. To refuse so large a portion of the representation of any country their place in the legislature, and at the same time to continue governing and

taxing the country as if it were actually so represented, would be an injustice so crying, so palpable, that the Protestants themselves would be among the first to appeal against it. The entire commercial and agricultural interests of the country would be suddenly thrown into the hands of the representatives of a few Irish rotten boroughs, or placed under the protection, partial and misinformed as they must frequently be, of the English, or Scotch members of parliament. To remedy this, no other means could be devised but a new penal statute prohibiting Catholics from presenting themselves as candidates at any election for shire or borough in the empire: but it may be much doubted, even with the aid of a dissolution of parliament, whether such a proposition would ever have passed through the Lower House; or, if it actually had so passed, whether the Irish nation would not be justified in regarding it as so much waste paper, not having received the sanction of its own representatives. Such a principle once recognised, it is out of the nature of things it should not very speedily be followed by an appeal to arms: and the war which would issue from such a question would more than any other combine the energies and sympathies of the entire nation. Such a war, like the war in Spain, or the war in

America, would not be a contest between rival sects, or a short skirmish between ancient jealousies, but a war earnest and universal, stern and long, for common rights and national independence. The other alternative would scarcely be better: it would be somewhat less violent and less speedy, but that is all. The Irish Catholic representatives, excluded from an English house of commons, would sit in Ireland, and divide, in the most palpable and alarming manner, the feelings, and duties, and interests of the nation. The repeal of the Union would virtually take place: public opinion would rally round the new parliament. But against that determined attitude of order and tranquillity which had already been so effective, what could be attempted? Popular organization would gain a greater degree of perfection every day; and if force were to be adopted, it would be the worst of all forces—the force of military tyranny against an oppressed and unarmed population. But moral influence is not to be extinguished in this manner; and England could not act thus without attentive witnesses of her tyranny in every country in Europe and America. We live in days when nations find a good character as necessary to their power and happiness as individuals; and England is by no means in such

a position, as willingly to put to risk whatever reputation she may still retain. It would not be long before she would be driven to a much simpler mode of escaping from the dilemma. In a word, she would be obliged to do as she has done before,—she would admit the Catholic, in order to benefit the Protestant—she would concede Emancipation rather than produce Separation. She would have to choose between a Relief bill or an Insurrection bill,—and finally she would grant, rather than be forced to give.

These were not the loose conjectures of casual conversation, but the deep convictions of every Catholic, upon which, when the occasion presented itself, he was fully determined to act. Though it was never embodied into public documents by the Association, or presented to the public eye in any distinct form, it was the settled resolve of all those persons more immediately engaged in directing its decisions, to set up Catholic candidates at the next general election for every county or town in Ireland, where such a measure could be rendered at all practicable. The consequences of such a resolution do not require to be insisted upon. The success of the candidates, in the state of excitement produced, and augmented by preceding measures, would have been certain. What Mr.

O'Connell had produced at Clare, every other agitator, with even far inferior means, might produce elsewhere. The contest would indeed be terrible; the two sects would be placed in every portion of Ireland face to face, but the victory would be absolute and inevitable; it would be flight on one side, and pursuit on the other. But such a victory, it is to be feared, would not stop there. It is doubtful even whether equalization after triumph would any longer satisfy. The country would stand on the very brink of a revolution. There are few of our living men who could prevent her from plunging into it.

Mr. O'Connell left Clare, and continued his journey in a sort of uninterrupted ovation to Limerick, which he entered under an arch of triumph at the celebrated stone of the violated Treaty. His address there to the people was admirable. It cheered and calmed at the same time. His journey to Dublin was scarcely less flattering. The towns poured out their inhabitants as he passed along; and though he travelled principally by night, he found the population assembled every where before their chapels to greet his arrival, with bonfires and every other demonstration of public joy. From Kildare he was drawn over the Curragh: the next day he arrived in Dublin. He was re-

ceived judiciously in the capital, without any of the usual accompaniments of popular triumph; yet never were the expressions of public sympathy more cordial and sincere. The Catholics were now persuaded that their emancipation could not be much longer deferred, and the coldest pressed round to take their share in the approaching liberation of their country.

The expenses incurred at the Clare election had been much more considerable, owing to the hurry and confusion of the arrangements, than had at first been apprehended. Subscriptions were immediately set on foot, and in most parts of Ireland liberally filled up. The "Catholic Rent" poured in from all quarters; the Clare fund increased. Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, where the organization was nearly complete, were easily brought forward. But Ulster was still backward, not from any want of the same ardour in the common cause, but in consequence of the deficiency of that arrangement and combination so conspicuous in other parts of Ireland.

It was determined to adopt measures to remedy this defect, and an expedition for the purpose of introducing more efficiently into the North the organization proposed by the Association for the collection of the Catholic Rent, the establish-

ment of Liberal Clubs, &c. was resolved on. Mr. Lawless, from his great intimacy with that part of Ireland, was selected as the organ of the Association.

The North was not yet ripe for this measure; nor was it to be expected that a delegate or deputy of the Association could carry it so immediately and quietly into effect, as the inhabitants themselves, in possession of superior knowledge of local difficulties, and of the means by which they might most easily be obviated; but, besides this, the moment selected was more than ordinarily inauspicious. The lately established Brunswick Clubs had pervaded every part of the country. The yeomanry, so far from having been disarmed, had considerably augmented their military resources. The entire country had been roused to the utmost degree of excitation, by the invectives and denunciations of the Orange party. An open and shameless cry for the blood of their fellow-citizens, and a direct avowal of an anxiety to bring back the scenes of 1798, had been heard from even the ministers of the gospel at several of their late meetings. The Association and its leaders in all these harangues had been pointed out in precise terms, as the prime source, the fertile principle, of the existing distractions of the

country ; and the vengeance, sometimes of the legislature, sometimes of the population, been repeatedly invoked against them and their proceedings. To send then a member of that body, and in the authorised character of its representative, to such men and at such a moment, was little less than a direct provocative to open combat, an immediate signal for civil war. Many of the most considerate Catholics deprecated this unadvised intrusion on the territory of their enemies, and regretted that their voice had not been consulted, or had not been allowed to be heard, in a matter of so much public moment. Nor was Mr. Lawless the person precisely the most calculated for such an adventure. His sincerity, his ardour, his perseverance, are beyond all impeachment : his popular talents have been felt,—the enthusiasm which he feels himself, and knows so well to communicate to an assembly of his countrymen, are better testimonies to his efficiency, than any commendation of mere phrase. But Mr. Lawless is more sparingly gifted with other qualities of a less shining nature, but far more important, for the judicious discharge of the delicate functions with which he was intrusted. A nice discrimination of time and place ; a keen perception of the innumerable shades of public feeling ;

a calm and even cold judgment of popular excitation ; a prospective regard to consequences ; and an exceeding discretion in the management of popular resources, are qualities which we require even in an ordinary diplomatist. In the diplomacy just noticed, they were more than especially necessary. Mr. Lawless would have made a good Commissioner to the Departments, under the French Republic. Had it been necessary to stimulate, to kindle, to force into immediate action, a slumbering province, or to call out on a sudden emergency a levy *en masse* of fierce and determined men, no person, I am persuaded, would go through "such a labour of love," with higher spirit, more success, or greater physical and moral intrepidity. But the task here was of an opposite description, and Mr. Lawless either mistook the character of his mission, or, with the best intentions, found nothing in his nature which was calculated to second the intentions of the Association. Had it really been his purpose to organise the North, it would appear to a reasonable man, that the most obvious mode which, under the circumstances, could have been adopted, would have been to have gone at once to the North, and in a manner the most private and unostentatious possible. In such a country, as little notice, as little delay, as little crowd as

possible, was the obvious policy of the Association. Mr. Lawless, personally objectionable as he undoubtedly was to very many, even of the most moderate of his antagonists, adopted every expedient which could most inflame their animosity. He hovered for several weeks on the borders of Ulster, and though it is not to be denied, that in those places he did much good, and with as much alacrity as could reasonably be expected, yet the very good which he did, the time which he spent in doing it, the excitation which accompanied, and the lofty terms in which he announced it to the Association, and through that body of course to the entire country, put it altogether out of his power to execute the really important part of his mission, when the period arrived for its accomplishment. All his time was spent in preparation; when the contest came, his enemy was also prepared. But this want of political generalship was likely to have produced consequences far more fatal than mere personal defeat. Mr. Lawless was inadvertently on the point of involving the two great contending parties in instant conflict, and by no very strained inference suddenly plunging both bodies, and perhaps both countries, into civil war.

Mr. Lawless had now addressed several suc-

cessive meetings in the different parts of the country through which he had passed, Kells, Dundalk, &c. with his characteristic eloquence, and had every where been received with the loudest acclamations. The Rent was established as he moved along, and hopes were indulged that the representations hitherto made to the Association, of the state of the Catholics of the North, were false, or grossly exaggerated. In every chapel where he appeared, crowds came to meet him, and many even of his opponents joined the people, and returned with favourable impressions. As he proceeded, the usual results of such assemblies became perceptible. Meetings had never been frequent in that part of the country, and the people were fresh, and easily affected by such appeals. The exertions of Mr. Lawless were indefatigable. His success exceeded his anticipations. The numbers of his auditors augmented as he had advanced—a corresponding enthusiasm grew up with their numbers. Throughout all this, too, the temper and order of the populace were marvellous. They had studied with success the lessons of Waterford and Clare. Though thousands and tens of thousands were grouped around him, a single violation of good order had not yet taken place. These were emphatic proofs that the spirit of

organization as well as agitation had spread through every part of the country. But Mr. Lawless was carried away, no extraordinary case, by his own victories. The time now seemed arrived for the subjugation of the "black North." Mr. Lawless determined to enter it at Ballybay. He was accompanied, it is said, by one hundred and forty thousand peasants, all well clothed, and it is added, well armed ; but their arms, on closer inquiries, have been reduced to a certain number of bludgeons and pistols, concealed under their frieze coats. This was of itself imprudent, but it was without the cognizance of Mr. Lawless. There were circumstances which rendered it infinitely more so. The Orangemen were alarmed at the hostile incursion, and prepared for defence. They were impressed with an idea that Ballybay was devoted to destruction by the Papists, and their allies were summoned from every part of the country to support them without delay. Three thousand Orangemen, who soon increased to five thousand, took possession of the opposite hill, immediately above the town. They every moment expected reinforcements. The next day it is very probable they could have counted a force of from ten to twenty thousand men. The two armies, for literally they were such, were

now very near each other, and no sort of disorder had yet marked the conduct of either. It was a singular sight, in the midst of perfect peace, and a general in his Majesty's service, General Thornton, standing close by. In a happy moment, ere it was quite too late, Mr. Lawless perceived his mistake. He had trusted too far to his sway over the multitude. To a certain point such rule is omnipotent,—beyond it, it vanishes into air. The people, as long as they are not attacked, will not attack others; they are orderly, if not provoked. Even a certain degree of provocation they can bear; but this forbearance has its limits, and these limits are easily passed in the North. The men here brought into collision, were not like the men he had lately been witnessing,—the men of Clare,—neither were their wrongs, nor their quarrel, nor their hatreds, as theirs. This was not a question between an old friend and a popular leader, between Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Fitzgerald: but it was a deadly and inextinguishable national feud, between two parties, the one masters, the other servants; one oppressors, the other oppressed—burning with mutual detestation—heated by remembrance of centuries of injury, and closing gradually on each other in the full conviction that they could not separate with-

out blows. That the Catholic party had any intentions of vengeance or outrage, it would perhaps be unjust to assert;* that they could never have entered the town, and preserved their tranquillity and good order, is now beyond a doubt. Their dispositions might have been the most peaceable—their intentions the most pure:—their peace and their purity no longer depended upon *themselves*. A single man with difficulty bears an insult—a hundred thousand men would certainly not bear even its shadow or intimation. The alarms of the Orangemen would have produced the same results as the confidence of the Catholics. A collision would have been inevitable: a single shot would have been enough. It was easy to begin, but where would it have ended? The entire North in four-and-twenty hours would have been up. But would the South have remained quiet? We shall soon come to that portion of the subject. In the mean time Mr. Lawless adopted the only best course to that of not having appeared there at all. The people took his entreaties to peace

* It was rumoured that, the day previous, they had marked the doors of many obnoxious persons for destruction; that a priest was at the head of the projected attack, &c. &c. But the Irish Catholic has been long accustomed to these calumnies.

and order, as words of course, plausible pretexts for the better concealing of real intentions, and were for the most part persuaded that he intended heading them in military array against their enemies. They hurried him on in his carriage to within a very small distance from the town. In a moment the difficulty and the danger flashed upon him. He rushed with a sudden effort from his carriage, mounted a grey horse, instantly dashed through the crowd,—and fled. In the very moment of his escape a partisan of his own is said to have presented a pistol to his breast, indignant at the failure of the expedition. It happily missed fire. Another leader was to have taken his place.* What the consequences might have been, it is not very difficult to conjecture. Ballybay might have been entered, but a rebellion that very night would have commenced in Ireland.

The South was in scarcely a less state of ferment than the North. The Association, with as good intentions, but not with juster views of the risks which they were about to incur, had recommended a measure, which was considered necessary by the circumstances of the times. Immediately after the Clare Election, several of

* Another marvel, which had no foundation in fact. But the lie was believed, and did as much injury as truth.

those factions, which had at various times so materially disturbed the peace of the country, and interfered with the constitutional system of the Association, began to reappear in the counties of Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary, under a variety of absurd designations. At the same time numerous attempts to establish in different parishes those pernicious secret societies, which have so long been the bane of Ireland, were discovered. It was of the utmost moment to repress them before they extended so far into the South as to create a counter-power, of uncertain and undefined principle and intentions to the power of the Association. The "Order of the Liberators"* had in some instances met the

* The most notorious of these secret societies are the *Ribbonmen*. Their existence was a subject of alarm and regret to the Catholics so early as 1812. It seems that two or three years previous, the outrages and violence of the Orangemen of Donegal became so intolerable, that the unprotected Catholic inhabitants resolved to form a confederacy for their common protection. An anti-Orange club, called the *Ribbon Society* (somewhat analogous to the Defenders' Society in 1792 and 1793), was accordingly set on foot. Imitating the illegality of the Orange Association, a certain secret oath was devised, and the club was limited to Catholics only. The institution quickly spread, even to the neighbouring counties, and many lodges of *Ribbonmen* were formed. There was a considerable diversity in the construc-

evil, and by prompt measures gone far to extinguish it. But its progress was still perceptible, and Messrs. Steele and O'Gorman Mahon were commissioned by the Association to take every necessary means to bring about immediate reconciliations amongst the people, and to suppress wherever they should be met with these secret injurious combinations, &c. Both gentlemen immediately entered upon their duty, but with considerably less danger, or less indiscretion than Mr. Lawless. They came into a territory

tion of these lodges: some introduced an oath of allegiance, others omitted it altogether. As it is the common lot of all secret institutions to grow worse every day, the *Ribbon Society*, blameable and mischievous as it was in its original formation, became gradually more objectionable and dangerous as it extended, and acts of outrage were latterly amongst the fatal consequences which marked its way. The Catholic Board at that period, and the Catholic Association at various intervals since, published and circulated addresses, which tended in a remarkable manner, in concurrence with the appeals and exertions of individuals, to counteract the progress of this dangerous institution. But they were not so fortunate or so effective, as perfectly to annihilate it. It exists still in many counties in its full vigour; and it is greatly to be apprehended, that in consequence of the dissolution of the Association (the only power which has any real influence in repressing it) it will now spread out, unchecked and unrepressed, over the greater part of the North and North-West of Ireland.

not in the hands of an enemy, with no opposition to encounter, and with no other task to perform, than to teach the people a better appreciation of their own interests. Their influence too (particularly after the recent election) was unbounded. Wherever they appeared in the turbulent districts, the factious laid by their animosities, and in great crowds flocked to the chapels to embrace in the spirit of forgiveness their most inveterate foes. It was certainly a striking sight, to see their chiefs on either side advance up the steps of the altar, and embrace each other in the presence of their priests and their respective factions, and call God solemnly to witness, that henceforth, for the good of their soul and the cause of their country, they would dwell together in amity and peace. Their hands were joined together by the clergyman, sometimes by one or other of the gentlemen just mentioned, and they returned home, frequently riding side by side, amidst the rejoicings and acclamations of the men, women, and children, of both parties. The commissioners, if so they may be called, were emboldened by success, and extended their visits and exhortations beyond Limerick. Tipperary was afflicted time immemorial by the same spirit of family faction, and its almost constant concomitant secret association. The passion for such

meetings increased : the numbers who flocked to them augmented. Instead of a few hundreds, who originally had been convened, and with some reluctance, for a particular purpose, thousands now were to be seen in every direction, anxious to reconcile their differences, and to sacrifice every private compact to their "loyalty," as they termed it, to the Association. They had at first begun by a few detached parties. Whole parishes were now summoned and obeyed. In the neighbourhood of Clogheen, on the boundaries of Waterford and Tipperary, sixteen parishes were at one time met in well-ordered march towards the interior of the country ; a little earlier, four thousand men with their chiefs at the head of their respective factions assembled at the small chapel of Borrisoleigh, in the neighbourhood of Tipperary. In a third parish, in still larger numbers, they came together, and entered in the noon-day one of the principal towns of the county. All this was sufficiently dangerous, though no evidence had yet been given of outrage ; on the contrary, up to the period of which we are speaking, their professed object was, universal reconciliation,—oblivion of private feud,—obedience to the mandates of the Association. But there were many features of the most perilous description which distinguished them from all

preceding assemblies. They assumed a regular uniform of green calico; their chiefs were distinguished by some fantastic but characteristic additions to the costume of their corps, such as feathers, green handkerchiefs bearing the portrait of Mr. O'Connell, &c. &c.: they displayed before them green banners with the name of the respective parishes or townlands, each preceded by their bands of music, and all other circumstances of military array.* There was something more in this than met the ordinary eye. The people had greatly misapprehended the objects of the Association, and in many instances could not be convinced that they had recommended the suppression of all former divisions and discords, with any other view, than to prepare the people for a general and united insurrectionary movement. "*When will he call us out?*" was more than once heard in the streets of Clonmell during the great Provincial meeting of last August, and frequently answered with the finger on the mouth, and a significant smile and wink from the by-standers. Many of these peasants too had arms concealed in the mountains near the town, and reserved for the coming occasion with

* One house alone in Cork furnished calico for these purposes to the amount of 600*l*.

great caution and assiduity. They joined these reconciliation meetings with the greatest alacrity, and forced the head of every family to send one or two persons of his name to represent him, in case he could not be able to give his personal attendance. Many felt a great repugnance to obey this summons ; but the secret combination law of the county Tipperary was so well known and so deeply dreaded, that they have been drawn, even from remote parts of the county of Waterford and Limerick, to appear at these assemblages. They were gradually losing their original character ; and, in a very short time, from the very necessity of the case, they would probably have degenerated into mere displays of strength and numbers. In one of these marches or military processions, they placed at their head a notorious outlaw of the name of Kisby, who had been implicated in the murder of the Maras, and paraded close to the barracks of the very policemen, who had been commissioned to seize him. It would have been a dangerous adventure on such an occasion to have attempted his capture, and the interference of a military force would inevitably have produced a conflict, and a conflict would have spread out into the commencement of civil war. On the other side, the impunity with which such chal-

lenges passed on, gave new confidence to the party. With of course very little information, and very local views, they already imagined themselves a match for the government itself, or rather they imagined the government was on their side, and that the only enemies they had to contend with, were the Orangemen of the North, and the Brunswickers of the South. Mr. Ellis, Master in Chancery, Sergeant Lefroy, and John Claudius Beresford, had lately, in either plain or implied terms, at a public meeting in Dublin and elsewhere, proclaimed the necessity of a second 1798, and had counted up in exaggerated phrases the physical forces, on which, in case of such an emergency, their party could rely. The denunciation and the defiance were answered by counter denunciation and counter defiance, on the part of the Catholics. Mr. O'Connell exclaimed, in a passionate tone of invective at the meeting at Clonmell, "Oh! would to God that our excellent Viceroy Lord Anglesey would but only give me a commission, and *if* those men of blood should attempt to attack the property and persons of his Majesty's loyal subjects, with a hundred thousand of my brave Tipperary boys, I would soon drive them into the sea before me." This was said in the warmth and wantonness of the moment; a

sort of rhetorical apostrophe, not intended to go beyond mere rhetoric; but the shout or rather the thunder of fierce voices, with which it was simultaneously sent back, spoke volumes of dread and danger. The commission from the Marquess of Anglesey was forgotten; the *if* was forgotten; they already imagined themselves in full pursuit. Nothing was remembered but O'Connell, and his hundred thousand men.

But these things commencing not merely in perfect innocence, but in the best and most laudable intentions, now began to wear a most serious aspect. An insult offered to a priest by a policeman during one of these processions in the northern part of the county of Tipperary, had been resented in the most summary manner. The character of the county blazed out at once, and the barracks were destroyed in a moment. Sunday after Sunday, new exhibitions, greater numbers, a bolder tone, a more menacing attitude, became conspicuous. The clergy at last grew alarmed: they found that their influence had touched its limits. In another week, it is not unlikely it might have altogether ceased. They applied to the leaders of the Association still remaining at Clonmell. Mr. O'Connell had left it the day after the Provincial meeting for the county of Kerry. These gentlemen

conferred together, the result was, that Mr. Sheil promised, the moment he returned to Dublin, he would bring the alarming nature of these assemblages before the consideration of the Association. If necessary that they should still continue, the reconciliation might be effected between the chiefs of the respective factions; but, at every sacrifice, the meetings themselves were to be got rid of. An address from the Association, supported by the advice and entreaties, if possible in person, of its members, would no doubt have its due effect. But the execution to be effectual should be prompt. Mr. Sheil on his arrival in Dublin, in two or three days afterward, in an eloquent speech, laid the case before the Association. His alarms seemed to many, premature and exaggerated, but to any person who had been a witness of the scenes they described, they must have appeared but to have been too well grounded. The address passed,* and was instantly transmitted to the

* Mr. Sheil worked with the utmost activity. In one of his late speeches he states, " By a vote of the Association his friend Mr. Conway had been requested to retire to the adjoining apartment to draw up an address; and while the Association continued in deliberation, his ready and powerful pen, over which on that occasion the good genius of Ireland surely presided, was engaged in framing that docu-

country. Its effect was what had been anxiously hoped for. The ferment instantly subsided—a new proof was produced of the omnipotence of the Association. About the same time Mr. Lawless, by a similar mandate, was suddenly and instantly recalled, and the promptitude of the measure atoned, in some degree, for the inconsiderateness with which such enormous chances had been hazarded. In the very same week that this sudden excitation had reached its climax in Tipperary, Mr. Lawless had attempted to enter Ballybay. Had he not been saved by a most providential combination of circumstances from prosecuting his intention, it is dreadful to think what might have been the awful results. A defeat of the crowd, who accompanied him, would have been followed up by a carnage;—the carnage, by a massacre of the Catholics of the North. Their brethren of the South would not have looked on—hundreds and thousands would have marched from Munster—a counter massacre—a Sicilian Vespers, perhaps, would have taken place. Ireland, ere the arm of the most vigilant government could

ment, which upon its presentation by its author, was passed by acclamation and without a notice, printed immediately, despatched by the mail, and in three short days tranquillised the country.”

have interposed, would have been stained,—
would have been deluged, with Irish blood.

The Proclamation of the government appeared a few days after, and added new force to the Address of the Association.* Without it, the

* “When I last left Clare,” says Mr. Steele, referring to the effect of these addresses, “and passed through Tipperary on my way to the Rotunda meeting in Dublin, the people came about me in crowds: I addressed them, thanked them upon the part of the Association, of my friend, and myself, for obeying our injunctions. What was their answer? Why it was this:—‘Agh! to be sure we did, Sir,—we valued the wind of the word from ye more than all the bullets they could fire at us.’” But this submission was still very precarious. “I know,” says he a few days after in a speech at the Rotunda, “I know the people thoroughly, and I here say that no power in nature, except the influence of the Catholic Association, keeps them, or can keep in tranquillity; but unless something be done by the government of the nature prayed for by the petition, *how long they may continue to be tranquil is a thing impossible to anticipate, and a thing which it is direful to contemplate.*” It was this, and the sense that the continuance of such tranquillity depended as much on the Orangemen (over whom they had no control) as on themselves, that most excited the apprehensions of the Association. Sir Harcourt Lees answered to government for the forbearance of the North, as Mr. O’Connell did for the forbearance of the South. All this was well as things then stood; but had a blow been struck, a single drop of blood been spilt, could either of them for a day longer have made good their engagements?

country would have been still exposed to all the violence of riot and insurrection. It would have been in the power of any body of three or four hundred Orangemen to have produced a rebellion. They had but to attack,—the Catholics would have resisted;—between attack and resistance, the work would have been done.

To support the edict of the government, troops were poured into Ireland. They were unnecessary in the South. It is fortunate they were so. Since the peace, most of the English regiments had been recruited by Irish, most of the Protestant regiments by Catholics. The 21st Fusileers, a Scotch regiment, was marched to Waterford from Bath, at a moment's warning. They landed with the impression that the campaign had already commenced. They found every thing friendly and quiet. During the night, shouts for "O'Connell and the Association" were heard from every side of the town, from the straggling soldiery. Half of them were Irish, and every Irishman a Catholic. The same things occurred in other regiments. It was difficult to say how far they could be relied on.* But

* It is well known that persons of the first military distinction have expressed opinions not very dissimilar. "There are two ways of firing, says one of these soldiers, *at* a man and *over* a man; and if we were called out against O'Con-

the turbulence and disaffection were not in the South, and against the North no men could be more effective than the Catholic regiments. During the entire administration of the Marquess of Anglesey, he never once had occasion to move troops from the North to the South. The necessity had always lain precisely in the opposite direction. The fact was, his name did more than any army. He had been in the South during the summer himself, and left his influence, the benign influence of a paternal government, behind him. The Irish Catholic, of every class, was individually attached to him: next to Mr. O'Connell, he was the most power-

nell and our country, I think we should know the difference." And how could it have been otherwise? the war would have been a war of religion, as well as of patriotism. Previous to the alteration in the law, allowing the Irish Catholic soldier the free use of his religion, many of the priests had declared, that they considered themselves bound to deter the Catholic peasantry from entering the army. In case of a general convulsion, is it impossible that a similar influence might have been exerted in a similar, or perhaps a still more dangerous manner? The superior officers of the army did not always take the necessary means to neutralise this feeling. The distinctions made between the two persuasions (an instance occurred at Kilkenny) produced a profound impression, both on the soldiery and the townspeople. The circumstance was trifling, but the inferences were most important.

ful man in Ireland. They did not ask whether it was the government, but whether it was the Marquess, who wished it. Government, in the mind of an Irish Catholic, until the period of his administration, was associated with nothing but oppression. But the Marquess was regarded as a protector against this oppression; he attached them to government by the manner in which he wielded it.

When the Catholic Association had somewhat recovered from the tumult into which these perilous experiments had thrown them, they began to congratulate themselves on their fortunate escape. The lightest evil which could have befallen them, was another dangerous attempt to suppress the Association. The fire which lit it would not have been extinguished, but scattered; but, in the mean time, there would have succeeded a new series of coercive measures,—suspension of the Habeas Corpus act—arbitrary arrests—vindictive trials—midnight retaliations;—and by another and not less rapid route than that which has already been alluded to, inevitable anarchy and civil war. The government could not suppress the Association without seizing the leaders; they could not seize the leaders without risking an immediate convulsion. To encounter even the probability of such a con-

clusion, it would have been necessary to have at least in preparation one hundred thousand men. But the Association had scarcely redeemed one error, when they were on the point of precipitating themselves into another. In the ensuing month of November, the question of "Exclusive Dealing" was started. The debates on its expediency were numerous and prolonged. Had the resolution passed into a measure, and had the measure been carried into effect, neither the arms of the King, nor the anathemas of the church, nor the parchment of the law, could have prevented in a few months, the total disorganization of Irish society, and reduced the Minister to the alternative of a war of extermination, or a hurried and reluctant concession of Catholic claims.

The first idea of this tremendous instrument was suggested by the non-intercourse resolutions of 1782. The proposition was brought before the Association by a respectable Catholic solicitor, Mr. Forde; but, as it was then understood, with the cognizance and under the sanction of Mr. O'Connell. After some discussion it was deemed right that the sense of the country should be taken, and the question was for a considerable period adjourned. The government, awakened to the very alarming results,

which necessarily would have followed from such an abrupt interference with all the commercial, and finally with all the social relations of both countries, judiciously took such measures in private as might tend to neutralise or defer the impending danger. Lord Cloncurry also appeared in the Association, and argued with great force against it. The question was not finally negatived, but delayed. The final debate was fixed for the 11th of December. On that day the Association rooms were crowded at an early hour to excess, and a considerable group of citizens were assembled in anxious expectation of the result round the door. It excited intense interest amongst all classes; no measure had yet been in agitation, which appeared so deeply and vitally to involve every interest in the country. After some preliminary discussion on the projected mission * to England, Mr.

* The mission to England, as it was called (the name was an unfortunate one), was designed for the purpose of pleading in person the cause of emancipation before the English public. From what has since occurred in most of the meetings held with such objects in that country, little doubt can exist that it would have been eminently unsuccessful. The supporters of the measures all along went on on the present plan (a very important error), that the lower and middle classes of Englishmen were radically the same, and equally accessible to the appeals of sound reason. They are two

O'Connell stood up to bring in the report of the different nations: one is not to be judged of by the other. The peasantry of Kent, Devonshire, &c. led in as they were, but far more blindly and more slavishly by their parsons and their landlords than any Irish freeholder by his priests, would not have listened to a single word from Mr. O'Connell. Such men as the freeholders of Lord Winchilsea at Penenden Heath, who only knew they must vote for the name which was placarded on their waggon,—the freeholders of Brixham, marched in by their rector Mr. Leyte, at the rate of three shillings a head,—would have been the sort of audience that the Irish missionaries would have had to encounter. Even their own aristocracy, for whom in other matters they have the most profound and habitual respect, were defied and maltreated; what could an Irish Catholic associator have expected? They might have turned out confessors, or perhaps martyrs, in the good cause, but it may be doubted whether they could have had to record very many miracles or conversions. In the large commercial towns, indeed, it is very probable they would have been heard with attention. But then the large towns did not require instruction. When once an Englishman can be brought to listen, it is proof sufficient that he is already enlightened. The project never took even in Ireland; it had been brought twice forward, and failed. Even on the best occasion, with all the incentives produced by the Penenden Heath business, and the admirable intrepidity of Mr. Sheil, together with the additional lure of a ballot, it did not, nor could it succeed. The very gentlemen honoured by the confidence of their countrymen declined. The small number of those who balloted is scarcely less indicative of this feeling. From the following statement, compared with the numbers on the books of

committee,* and proposed that they should pass to the order of the day. A desultory conversa-

the Association, it will appear that this assertion is perfectly correct.

Daniel O'Connell	.	.	.	97
Richard Sheil	.	.	.	94
Thomas Wyse	.	.	.	91
O'Gorman Mahon	.	.	.	82
William M'Dermott	.	.	.	80
T. M. Murphy	.	.	.	80
M. D. Bellew	.	.	.	58
Montesquieu Bellew	.	.	.	55
Dominick Ronayne	.	.	.	37

* This report was highly interesting. It was the report of the committee appointed to examine how far the system of Exclusive Dealing, particularly in reference to servants, had been carried on by the anti-Catholics. Mr. O'Connell stated, "that he had been directed to report that the committee had discovered and ascertained, that there had existed for a considerable time, and to a great extent, persecution by bloodhound bigots, and that this persecution had been carried into all the departments of life. (*Hear, hear!*) This persecution had been carried into every trade and every profession; but it has principally been adopted to the great injury of one unfortunate class in society, the poor Catholic servants." (*Hear, hear!*) "We could bring into our report," said he, "the most precise details, but we have not done so, as we did not think it right to inflame the public mind more upon this subject than it is at present; and besides, we scorned to immortalise by exposure those who have been guilty of it in the manner that their criminality deserves.

tion ensued, and Mr. O'Connell agreed to defer his observations. Mr. Forde then brought forward his motion. The wording was judicious and moderate. It was vehemently opposed by Mr. O'Gorman, who moved a condemnatory amendment,* which, after a highly animated but very

(*Hear! and cheers.*) One class I have stated have particularly suffered,—the Catholic servants,—and the sufferings have been increased since the time of the memorable declaration made by Dr. Magee in the House of Lords. Since then many and many have been the victims and the martyrs, many have been murdered by that cruel and emaciating persecution; for I call it *murder*. Whether the death of a human being be hastened by the horrors of starvation, or by the gun of the Orangeman, or the yeomanry bayonet, the crime is equally detestable in the eye of God, and the opinion of every good man. (*Hear, hear!*) Yes, I repeat it, a persecution of this nature has been carried on by the Brunswickers, and the '*backing*' system has by them been acted on to a frightful extent." Mr. Forde's motion was not then an act of unprovoked hostility; the worst name which could be given it, was that of retaliation; in many instances it was an act of simple self-defence.

* *Mr. Forde's original motion*—Resolved, That we deem it necessary to recommend to the people of Ireland, not to deal with notorious Orangemen; and further, that a preference in dealing should be given by Roman Catholics to those who dissent from them in religion, but who may have proved by their acts that they are friendly to civil and religious liberty.

Mr. O'Gorman's amendment—That although it appears

orderly debate of six hours, was finally negatived, as well as the original motion of Mr. Forde. The motion of Mr. O'Connell, warmly supported by Mr. Wyse, Mr. H. Curran, and opposed by Mr. Lawless, Mr. Norton, &c. was then put and unanimously carried at half past ten. This decision was received with approbation by a majority of the country, and once more relieved the government from a position scarcely less difficult than any in which it had yet been placed.

The first result of such a measure, if indeed it could have been reduced to practice, would have operated in the most decisive manner on the entire country. A few weeks before, a tolerably

by the report now made, and by abundant proof, that the anti-social and uncharitable system of recommending exclusive dealing, has been extensively acted on by the opponents of the Catholics, and was also sanctioned if not recommended by the tenor of the evidence reported to have been given by the Right Rev. Dr. Magee, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, before a committee of the House of Lords, we the Catholic Association repudiate the baneful and illiberal example of such recommendation, and declare that we deem that principle to be inconsistent with Christian charity and Catholic principles, social order and good fellowship, and unworthy of the advocates of the glorious cause of civil and religious liberty, and of men contending for an equality of civil rights on the great grounds of universal liberty of conscience and freedom of opinion.

Seconded by the Rev. Mr. Murray.

clear illustration of its probable effects was presented in the county of Wexford. One of the directors of the Wexford Provincial Bank, a Mr. Hughes, happened to attend a Brunswick meeting. The people, alive to the slightest circumstance connected with their cause, resolved upon a system of immediate retaliation. During the next day, the most profound silence and secrecy prevailed, under cover of which, and through the intervention of the Clubs and the Rent collectors, the country people were quietly organised for the intended attack. This done, a simultaneous run commenced upon the Bank, and continued until every provincial note in their possession had been exchanged for gold. The panic spread, and without any more obvious reason than the usual cry of insecurity, *sauve qui peut*—a similar run took place in Clonmell, and then in Kilkenny, and it was apprehended it would progressively extend to the entire of the South of Ireland. The Provincial Bank adopted the most prompt and decisive measures. In one week it got over not less than 1,500,000*l.* in gold.* This supply was of the utmost conse-

* The commercial power exhibited by this establishment is above praise or parallel in commercial history, and realised the assurances given at its formation, that they would substitute a permanent and secure system of banking for that

quence. It restored confidence ; but pending the discussions on " Exclusive Dealing " in the Association, such was the well-grounded apprehension of the Board, that it was ordered to be retained until the proposition should have been satisfactorily disposed of. The Provincial Bank is conducted by Catholics and Protestants conjointly, and enjoys a large share (justly merited) of the public confidence. If such an incident as the run upon a single branch bank produced such large remittances from its parent establishment in London, the universal demand of so large a population as the Catholics of Ireland, could not have been answered without the utmost difficulty. But the exclusive or non-intercourse system would not have operated immediately, but collaterally, on the banks. The first effects would have been felt in the humbler walks of trade. The Catholic population, according to their census returns, would not be much less than eight millions. Supposing the average expenditure of each person to be only threepence per day, the yearly expenditure would be 36,500,000*l*. By a late official return from the directors of the Bank of Ireland, it appeared that bank-notes circulating in 1820 involved the whole of the South of Ireland in bankruptcy.

culated from ninety to one hundred days. The whole circulating medium, including the surplus issues and the bank-notes of all other establishments, amounted to 7,000,000*l.*, and this, turned four times in the year, made only 28,000,000*l.*, of which the Catholics could control 21,000,000*l.*, leaving the remainder to be divided between the necessities of the liberal and illiberal Protestants. Then came the landed proprietors—they possess certainly the fee of the country, and spend the greater portion of the rents abroad: but as they receive their rents but *twice* a year, or rather *once*, in most of the southern districts, they could not have much influence on the circulation. The effect of this system of retaliation in the Catholic districts would thus have been complete. It would have extinguished Protestant trade, in many instances, peremptorily and altogether. In the North the injuries would have been more balanced. But the Catholics would not have rested here: they would have attacked the Bank of Ireland. Nine-tenths of the stock is held by Catholics. The Catholics, however, by a by-law (neutralising the concession of the bill of 1793), were excluded from the directorship. They had, therefore, as good ground as in the case of servants, &c. &c. for retaliation. The resolution of Mr.

Forde was intended to be followed up, if necessary, by a second, calling on the proprietors of Bank of Ireland stock to sell out and immediately convert into gold. This resolution would have been easily passed, in case the Question had been again rejected. Indeed, no effectual opposition could be offered to it: Mr. O'Connell, or any of the other leaders, had they been so disposed, would have only incurred by such opposition, a very unnecessary disgrace. A general run on the same day from every part of Ireland on the branch banks was contemplated, and would, if practicable,* have also been organised on the same principle as the run on the Bank of Wexford, and no doubt with the same success. The result would have been, the immediate withdrawal of a large proportion of the

* Fortunately, at that time the Bank of Ireland notes were only payable in Dublin, the act which had passed the previous session (1828), compelling all banks in Ireland to pay at the places where they issued notes, did not come into operation until April 1829. But the provincial bank had from the commencement framed its engagements upon this principle. This probably was the only cause why the pressure fell upon that establishment alone: indeed its liberal constitution, as compared with all other similar establishments, should have protected it until the last; and therefore the attack can only be accounted for by the state of the law.

seven millions usually in circulation in bank paper from England, and an immediate loss upon such circulation, to the Bank.* It is very immaterial too whether the whole of such sum would be actually drawn : the apprehension of such a sum being wanted, would as effectually work the effect proposed, as if actually such sum had been put into circulation. The gold, if not in the hands of the peasant, must be in the bank to meet him; in either case it would be necessary to withdraw it from the English market. The bearing of so sudden a transition on the commercial transactions of that country, particularly in the existing depressed state of trade, can easily be imagined. The panic of 1820 left for many years behind it the most fatal traces. But in Ireland the effects would have been tremendous. It would instantly have limited all discounts to such a degree, that half of the commercial establishments must suddenly and inevitably have perished. Most of the Irish merchants are,

* The state of the currency of Ireland, so late as the month of March in this year, is without parallel. Though the paper currency is issued exclusively by public banks of undoubted solvency, so great was their apprehension, that to support a currency of 7,000,000, it is notorious they held 4,500,000 of gold in their coffers, besides about 300,000 in silver coin.

comparatively speaking, retailers, and dependent entirely on the English manufacturers for their supply.* The impossibility, in conse-

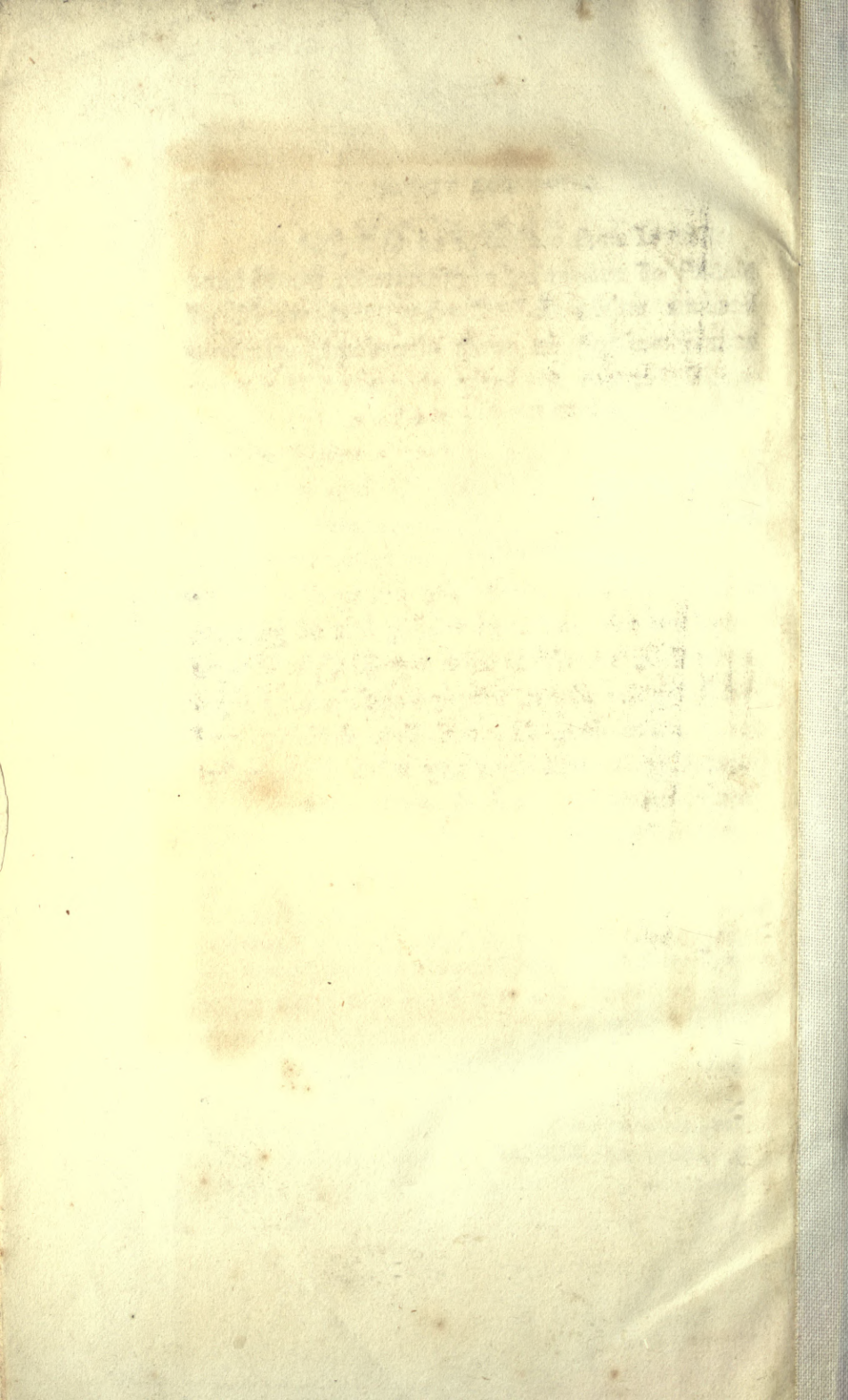
* It is very true, that English commerce would not be at all affected in the same proportion as Irish; but the effect on Irish would be so violent and extensive, by a rigid adherence to the system in contemplation, that the government could not but feel, in a very short time, a large portion of the same embarrassment. Of the 60,000,000*l.* which England exported in 1827, Ireland did not import more than 16,000,000*l.* Compare that with the enormous home expenditure of England, and it will perhaps appear a mere feather in the scale. But the very poverty which this return indicates has prevented any very considerable masses of capital from forming in Ireland. Most of the wholesale dealers are importers from English manufacturers, and bear to them the same relation that their own retailer does to the wholesale merchant. All these men are absolutely dependent upon the fluctuation of the home markets. Before so violent a change as that proposed, they would have been all in one way or the other crushed. Injurious effects upon the taxes (at least such as are derived from excisable articles) would have been next experienced. England annually (one year with the other) has 400,000*l.* imposed on her trade for the government of Ireland, and is obliged to make up at least 5,000,000*l.* in other ways for the deficit of the Irish revenue below the expenditure. This deficit would not be very likely to decrease under such circumstances, even on the presumption that the tranquillity of the people were such, as to require no marked addition to the armed force of the country. But who could, or who ought to count on *such* tranquillity, as black and as dangerous as gunpowder, where

quence of such a change as that just contemplated, of answering engagements, would have become universal. Bankruptcies would of course multiply in every direction: commerce would become perfectly stagnant: the same stagnation would by degrees be communicated to agriculture. The peasants would starve; the whole country would fall into a state of absolute pauperism: every one would require charity, and there would be none, or nearly none, to give it. To this add the frenzy of religious hate, the new rancours arising out of political separation, the alarm on every side, the danger justifying the alarm, revenge anticipating a general convulsion, and ambition desiring and promoting it; and then say what force, what power, moral or physical, could prevent such a nation from crumbling abruptly to pieces, or rescuing herself from the intolerable burden, by some fierce and sudden effort at redemption.

a simple spark falling, would instantly produce the most appalling explosion? The very fear of such a catastrophe would require as many precautions, and nearly as high an expenditure, as the actual reality.

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Wyse, (Sir) Thomas
Historical sketch of the
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of Ireland

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